

BLASPHEMOUS

Written by  
Luke Piotrowski

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**INT. MOVING TRUCK - NIGHT**

A ten foot rental, two men in the cab, one older, one younger: Alan VILLARS, 50s, behind the wheel, guiding the truck down a gravel road. Ed KERRIGAN, 30s, beside him.

The radio BLARES. Fire and brimstone. Backwoods broadcasting. No production values, just a madman with a microphone.

RADIO PREACHER (O.S.)  
REPENT! REPENT for the venom in your veins! We are born with the beast on our backs, his fangs in our throat. And the only way, the *only* way to bear that weight?

CROWD (O.S.)  
Repent!

RADIO PREACHER (O.S.)  
Say it again. As if your eternal lives depended on it.

CROWD (O.S.)  
REPENT!

RADIO PREACHER (O.S.)  
For we are sinners all, may we never forget it. Broken souls in a broken world.

Kerrigan stares

OUT THE WINDOW,

at the passing trees. Buildings here and there. Crumbling barns. Vehicles left to rot, swallowed by kudzu.

He rests his head against the glass. Troubled.

VILLARS  
First time's never easy. It's not like you expect.

Kerrigan nods, trying to look confident.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Don't think of her as a person.

**EXT. COMMUNE - NIGHT**

The moving truck pulls in. Tents and mobile homes, repurposed sheds and barns. A ramshackle community hidden in the woods.

People watch them pass: A ten year old BOY with a toddler on his hip.

A stern, bearded MAN with an automatic rifle on his.

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - NIGHT**

KERRIGAN

They have guns.

VILLARS

(unfazed)

How bout that.

ANOTHER MAN with a rifle steps into the glow of their headlights. He raises a hand. Signals them to slow down, pull off. They do.

This second man peers through Kerrigan's window. The first closes in on the driver's side. TAP TAP TAP, rifle barrel on the glass. *Roll it down.*

Villars obeys. Kerrigan swallows.

MAN 1

You him?

VILLARS

We're them.

MAN 1

We'll go on foot from here.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

The armed men lead the way through the tall grass.

A SILO

looms in the distance. A rusted metal monolith.

The second man raises his lantern. For the first time, Kerrigan notices

## THE PEOPLE

surrounding them. Bystanders, still as scarecrows. Flannel shirts and overalls for the men. Modest, colorless dresses for the women, hems kissing the ground. Members of this reclusive community. They linger, come to watch.

MAN 1

Who told y'all you could be out here?

One of the bystanders, a YOUNG WOMAN, speaks up.

GIRL

Nobody.

MAN 1

Get on, then.

No one moves.

MAN 1 (cont'd)

NOW!

That prompts a mass exodus. Half a dozen people scurrying out of the field, headed back to their homes.

All but one. A small GIRL who approaches Kerrigan. Whispers.

CHILD

Where are you taking my sister?

Startled, he turns. Guilty, he smiles. Kneels before her.

KERRIGAN

Someplace safe.

The child shakes her head.

CHILD

No place safer than home.

Kerrigan glances at their armed escort, at the others, fleeing on command. He doesn't exactly agree with the kid, but he's not going to argue. Besides, he's being left behind. Villars WHISTLES sharply.

The girl watches Kerrigan go. Into the silo.

**INT. SILO - NIGHT**

Moonlight pierces the holes in the surface, catches the dust in the air. Beams of light in the cavernous space.

Kerrigan cranes his head. The ceiling is too high to see, lost to darkness.

And there, at the base of this empty structure...

A WOMAN.

Wrapped in a bedsheet. Bound to a chair. Secured by rope. Only her bare feet are visible. The rest is pure white, reflecting moonglow from the open doorway.

THE BLOOD

on her face is the sole exception. A stark, red Rorschach blot stains the sheet. A busted lip, a bloody nose?

Kerrigan blanches. Unnerved, overwhelmed.

The Wrapped Woman can sense their presence. She knows they're here. She turns her head. And BREATHES.

With each inhalation, the damp sheet clings to the contours of her face. With each exhalation, it puffs out again.

A sudden FLAPPING from above makes Kerrigan jump.

KERRIGAN

Are those bats?

Man 2 follows his gaze. Squints. Shakes his head. No.

But Kerrigan keeps staring into the shadows above. He knows he heard something. And he can almost... see something. As his eyes adjust, he can almost make out

BODIES.

An undulant mass of dark bodies, upside down in the dark. An orgy of shadow people. Barely perceptible. Not possible.

The Wrapped Woman MOANS softly. Kerrigan blinks.

There's nothing there. Just the swirling vertigo brought on by tall places.

The woman's moan becomes a SOB. Pained and aimless.

VILLARS

Sedatives?

MAN 1

Don't work on her. We've been afraid to try too much.

Villars nods.

MAN 1 (cont'd)  
Is it true, what's in her?

VILLARS  
What does your heart tell you?

MAN 1  
...To be ready. The trumpets are  
tuning up.

Kerrigan isn't thrilled to hear doomsday talk. But Villars slaps the man on the shoulder.

VILLARS  
May we be alive to hear them. You've  
done the right thing. The rest is on  
us.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Kerrigan leads the way, the Wrapped Woman on his back, Villars in step behind them. A strange pilgrimage through the tall grass. It waves around their waists, the wind a cold and lonely rush. Movement and sound like the sea.

Her chin digs into Kerrigan's shoulder. Her bloody, sheeted mouth is inches from his ear. She MIMICS the sound of the wind. A soft, wet *woosh* whispered gently, lovingly.

WRAPPED WOMAN  
...shhhh...shhhh...

He rankles but says nothing.

**INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT**

A BABY sobs in his crib. His MOTHER hurries in, scoops him up. Inconsolable.

Outside, dogs are BARKING like mad. The Mother parts the curtains, peers

OUTSIDE.

Kerrigan, body on his back, is passing by, Villars at his side. She closes the curtains, leans against the wall, waiting for them to leave.

**EXT. YARD - NIGHT**

The BARKING is louder out here. Every dog in the community is riled up. Rattling chainlink, testing restraints. Foaming at the mouth. The passing presence of the Wrapped Woman driving them mad.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

The horses feel it too. WHINNYING in fear. One rears up, nearly knocking down a panicked STABLE HAND.

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - REAR - NIGHT**

The back door slides up. Kerrigan and Villars offload their human cargo.

There's a short chain bolted to the wall in back. Kerrigan pulls a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

The two men affix the other cuff to her ankle, leave her on the floor. But just as they're about to leave...

WRAPPED WOMAN

Let me stay.

Kerrigan pauses.

VILLARS

Kerrigan.

A warning. Kerrigan ignores it. The shrouded face turns to him. Breathing. In. And out. *She can't possibly see him...*

WRAPPED WOMAN

Kerrigan. I like that name, that's a God-fearing name. My name's Paula Jean.

VILLARS

Shut the door.

PAULA JEAN

Kerrigan. If you fear God, there's no need to fear me. Right? Please.

A sweet voice. Tender and pleading.

Kerrigan's not having it. He brings the door down.

WRAPPED WOMAN

PLEASE!

SLAM.

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars and Kerrigan, side by side in the cab again. Not a word spoken between them. But now there's a periodic BANG from the back of the truck. An echoing, repetitive THUD.

KERRIGAN  
What's she doing back there??

VILLARS  
Banging her head, I imagine.

WHAM. WHAM. It sounds bad.

KERRIGAN  
She's gonna kill herself!

VILLARS  
She won't.

KERRIGAN  
Shouldn't one of us ride back there with her?

Villars shoots him a look. Cold as hell. *Are you out of your fucking mind?*

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
Well, can we at least put on the radio?

Villars switches it on.

RADIO PREACHER (O.S.)  
HELL IS REAL! HELL IS WAITING! It's waiting for me, it's waiting for you. God's hands alone-

KERRIGAN  
Music, maybe? Instead.

Villars smirks. Wryly amused.

VILLARS  
Sure.

He twists the knob. A sentimental POP SONG. A surreal counterpoint to the random banging from behind them.

Slowly, gradually, the banging stops.



Kerrigan tenses. And then... a muffled VOICE. *Is she...*

KERRIGAN  
Is she singing along?

VILLARS  
Nope.

But Kerrigan cocks his head, straining to hear.

KERRIGAN  
No, listen-

VILLARS  
No, *don't* listen. I warned you you'd see things, hear things. We're not here to listen, we're here to help. That girl's body is a haunted house, you want to do something about that or don't you?

KERRIGAN  
Yessir.

Not enthusiastic enough for Villars' tastes. He prods.

VILLARS  
We're in this together, I got your back. You got mine?

KERRIGAN  
Yes. Yeah, I'm sorry. I don't mean to- I know you got saddled with me. I know Father Manning was meant to-

VILLARS  
Father Manning got caught sinning. That's God's will.

KERRIGAN  
The sinning or the getting caught?

Kerrigan smirks, trying to lighten things up. But Villars isn't joking.

VILLARS  
Both. Manning's out. Bishop sent you in his place, that means God sent you in his place, that means you're right where you're supposed to be. Yes or no?

KERRIGAN  
Yes.

Villars nods. *Good.*

VILLARS

There's a plan. God's got a plan and we're part of it. Keep that in mind, you'll be alright.

KERRIGAN

...Why do we have to move her, though? Couldn't we just do it there? Isn't that safer-

VILLARS

Nah. Too much family there. What we do ain't easy, often gets ugly. Once we start, we cannot stop. Best be isolated. Home team advantage, you know?

KERRIGAN

Yeah...

They ride in silence again. The innocuous strains of Belinda Carlisle's *Mad About You* filling the cab.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

The moving truck rattles along.

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - REAR**

The music is muffled but audible here. The Wrapped Woman, Paula Jean, sits up, rocking with the movement of the vehicle. Under her breath, she sings along. Distant.

PAULA JEAN

"mad about you... lost in your eyes..."

Behind her, she's managed to work

HER FINGERS

free. They peek out from the sheet. They've found the hex-bolt fixing her chain to the wooden wall.

And they're working on it. Twisting it. Tender flesh on angled metal.

The process is splitting her fingertips. Shredding them. The blood makes it slippery, makes the job harder.

She'll just have to tighten her grip. Ignoring the pain, she keeps twisting, keeps mumbling.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

"something about you... right here beside me... touches the touched part of me like I can't believe..."

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - NIGHT**

The song wraps up. Kerrigan puts down the window, letting the breeze cool his face.

The soft, all-too-serene voice of the RADIO DJ takes over.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

"Mad About You" Belinda Carlisle here on 98.7. You're listening to *Tabitha*, I'll be with you all night. And, hey, if you're mad about someone, why not let them know? Give us a call, make a dedication. Like my friend, Eddie here. Where are you from, Eddie?

Silence on the other end of the line. A slight HISS of static that makes Kerrigan squint.

RADIO DJ (O.S.) (cont'd)

Why don't you tell us who you're thinking about tonight?

Another long pause. One that's eventually broken.

EDDIE (O.S.)

...mom?

Kerrigan sits up. Alert. Alarmed. He turns to Villars but the older man doesn't seem to notice anything's amiss.

But Kerrigan knows that voice. The voice on the radio.

It's him.

EDDIE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Mom, I'm scared, I...

This doesn't sound like a radio show dedication anymore. It sounds like audio from a 911 call. Shitty reception. Tinny echo. A panicked, choked voice.

EDDIE (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 I took a lot of pills, I didn't know  
 who to call...

Kerrigan's hand shoots out, snaps the radio off.

It doesn't work. His voice is still coming through the  
 speakers, sobbing now.

EDDIE (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 I don't want to die. I don't want to  
 die, I just don't want to be like  
 this... I'm sorry... Mom, I'm really  
 sorry...

Drunk and pleading and terrified. Just hearing it tears  
 Kerrigan apart. He kicks at the radio with his foot.

Villars swerves, taken by surprise.

VILLARS  
 Hey hey HEY! What the hell are you  
 doing?!?!

Kerrigan sits back. Takes a breath and listens.

It's just a commercial. No dedication, no desperate phone  
 call. Just vacuous ad copy.

Kerrigan wipes the sweat from his upper lip. Leans his head  
 out the window.

Villars knows something's wrong.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
 What'd you hear?

KERRIGAN  
 Nothing.

Villars reaches out. Puts a hand on his shoulder, gives him  
 a nod.

VILLARS  
 That's right. One more time.

KERRIGAN  
 Nothing.

The touch, the camaraderie, it helps Kerrigan find his  
 strength. He clears his throat.

VILLARS

We have strength in us. She doesn't like that. She's gonna use-

SLAM. The vehicle collides with something. Swerves. Villars fights for control.

The windshield is shattered, covered with blood.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

The moving truck careens, tilts, tips off the road, and onto its side.

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER**

Sideways. The dust settles. Villars pounds the wheel, fumbles with his seatbelt.

VILLARS

Shit!

KERRIGAN

Father.

VILLARS

SHIT!

KERRIGAN

Father Villars.

An earnest, pleading look.

VILLARS

Hell, cursing ain't a fucking sin in times of crisis.

Still, he offers a lackadaisical sign of the cross. Shoulder, shoulder, head, chest. Then he's out the door.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

Both men stagger out. Villars is pissed. Distracted.

VILLARS

You alright? You hurt?

KERRIGAN

No. You?

Villars waves him off and circles the vehicle, assessing the damage. There's

A CARCASS,

a massive carcass, spread across the blacktop. Meat and bone. Whatever it was they hit, they obliterated it.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

Oh. Oh no. What is that? A horse?

Villars has found the head. Skin in tatters. Eye bulging from the socket. Slick, black fur.

VILLARS

Bull. Must have jumped the gate... or tore through it. Made to panic.

He's fuming. Kerrigan follows his gaze back toward the moving truck.

KERRIGAN

You're not saying she did this...

VILLARS

You're a smart man, Kerrigan.  
Your ancestors ate of the tree.  
You've got reason, intellect.

He nudges the horn of the severed bull's head with his boot.

VILLARS (cont'd)

He had neither, no defenses. What'd I say about a haunted house? Every place we take her is a *bad* place. Where bad things happen. You want to perform an exorcism, you best start believing in demons. And all that they're capable of.

Kerrigan stares at the stretch of carnage on the road.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Come on.

He waves Kerrigan over and kneels beside the truck, trying to find a place to gain purchase. To flip it.

Kerrigan knows it's a lost cause.

KERRIGAN

Father. ...*Father*. There's no way.

He's right, of course. Villars sighs. Then GROANS and kicks the roof of the overturned truck.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
What do we do? Call a tow?

VILLARS  
No.

Villars stares into space. Making a decision.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
No, we call the diocese. They'll send someone.

He takes his cellphone from his pocket, pacing.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Signal ain't great. I'm gonna head up that hill, make the call. You stay right here. Right. Here.

KERRIGAN  
What do I say if someone stops?

Villars looks up and down the road.

VILLARS  
They won't.

Alone with the truck, Kerrigan scans the area. Empty field on one side. Trees on the other.

After a beat,

HEADLIGHTS

crest the hill. Another car. Heading their way. Kerrigan's jaw clenches, he mumbles under his breath.

KERRIGAN  
Okay... Just go. Go on now, just go.

Headlights wash over him. Over the overturned vehicle.

But the passing car doesn't slow. It drives on.

*Whew.* Kerrigan smiles in relief and leans back against the roof of the overturned truck, closing his eyes.

Soft SCRATCHES from within. *She's moving around.*

At first he doesn't notice, but then... BANG! She pounds. He jumps. Steps back.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
 ...Ma'am?

No response.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
 You okay in there? Are you injured?  
 Paula Jean?

Nothing. He backs away, eyeing the truck warily.

Until he hears... HUMMING. The melody from the song on the radio, made simple and haunting.

It's not coming from within the truck.

Kerrigan springs into action, checking the door. It's locked and latched. No way she could have gotten out, but...

He can hear her. On the other side of the truck.

Slowly, he circles around. Inch by inch. And-

THERE SHE IS.

Impossible. The Wrapped Woman is sitting in the middle of the road, pristine white sheet, blood stained face. Her arms are free now. Cradling the severed bull's head in her lap. Its dead eyes stare, tongue lolling.

Her veiled face is angled toward it with affection. Like she's singing to an infant.

But then she stops. And looks at Kerrigan. A surreal image. A quite moment. Abruptly interrupted by-

SCREEECH. HONK. A pickup truck nearly runs Kerrigan down.

It misses by inches. Slams on its brakes. Lays on the horn. Rubber burns. Smoke fills the air.

The truck halts.

Heart in his throat, Kerrigan glances back where Paula Jean was seconds ago.

She's gone, of course. *You'll hear things, see things...*

DRIVER  
 Holy shit, buddy! I'm so sorry.

The DRIVER leaps out of his pickup, hazard lights flashing. He races over to guide Kerrigan off the road.



KERRIGAN

I'm fine. There's no need-

DRIVER

Are you okay? Christ, I didn't even see you. I was looking at the wreck, then you just stepped on out. You hurt, man? You good?

Kerrigan nods, distracted.

KERRIGAN

I'm alright.

DRIVER

What the fuck happened?

KERRIGAN

It was, uh, a bull. Out in the road.

DRIVER

No shit. I think you're in shock, big guy. Sit down.

He helps Kerrigan down. Gives him a solid once over.

DRIVER (cont'd)

Sit tight, I got a winch.

KERRIGAN

...What?

The Driver is already back at his truck, climbing in, pulling it around. It's not until he grabs the steel cable from the front winch of his truck that Kerrigan understands.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

Oh. No, we already called someone.

DRIVER

Won't take but a minute. Get you upright, at least.

Kerrigan glances nervously back at the moving truck. He can't let this guy find out what they're hauling. Too much to explain. He gets to his feet.

KERRIGAN

You don't have to do that.

DRIVER

I know I don't *have* to. I want to. You wanna help/

KERRIGAN

No. Please. My friend... He'll be right back, I appreciate it but no.

The Driver is dumbfounded.

DRIVER

A tow's gonna take hours and charge you hundreds. You sure-

KERRIGAN

I'm sure. Have a good night.

The Driver looks like he wants to say more. Especially when he sees Kerrigan lick his lips and glance at the moving truck once more.

But he decides against it. It's clear he's got a feeling but... maybe that feeling is telling him to go.

DRIVER

Suit yourself. I'm gonna phone in about the carcass, though. Someone's gotta get it off the road.

KERRIGAN

Absolutely.

The Driver nods, replaces the winch hook. He's about to get back behind the wheel when-

BANG. A sound from within the moving truck. BANG-BANG. A first. Pounding on the wall.

Kerrigan's face falls. *Shit.*

The Driver freezes.

DRIVER

What was that?

The jig is up. Kerrigan knows it. But he tries anyway.

KERRIGAN

Cargo. Must have shifted.

*Yeah. Right.*

DRIVER

In that case, we better check on it. What do you say?

KERRIGAN

Please. Drive on.

He locks eyes with the Driver.

And Paula Jean calls from within the moving truck.

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)  
Hello? Is someone there?

She sounds pitiful. Terrified.

That's enough for the Driver. He turns back to his truck... and grabs his shotgun.

KERRIGAN  
You don't understand. Please. Just wait-

The Driver raises the barrel. Points it right at him.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
I'm a priest!

The Driver doesn't give a shit. But he doesn't fire.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
I'm a Catholic priest-

DRIVER  
Where's your collar then, "Father"?

KERRIGAN  
We don't always wear them-

DRIVER  
I bet.

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)  
Please! Please, if someone's there, can you help me??

KERRIGAN  
We're performing an exorcism-

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)  
I don't know where I am!

DRIVER  
Right, well, I'm performing a citizen's arrest, 'less you open up that fucking truck!

Kerrigan stares at him. Helpless. No clue what to do.

BLAM. The Driver fires into the air. Kerrigan winces.

**EXT. HILL - NIGHT**

Villars is pacing, phone to his ear, when he hears the shot.

VILLARS

No. No, no, no.

He hangs up and rushes back toward the road.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

Reluctantly, Kerrigan unlocks the back of the truck. Grips the handle.

KERRIGAN

Don't make me do this. I'm begging you.

DRIVER

Funny. Bet that girl you got in there said something similar, didn't she?

Kerrigan hesitates until the barrel of the shotgun presses into the back of his head.

The Driver is visibly excited. Amped up on adrenaline and his chance to be a hero.

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)

Please! Please, these men... Oh my God...

She begins to SOB. Long, pained WAILS.

DRIVER

You open that door. Or I fucking paint it.

The WAILING continues. Accompanied by desperate pounding. She's really putting on a show, raising a racket.

Kerrigan jerks the handle, yanks the door sideways.

The wailing and pounding suddenly stops. SILENCE.

Kerrigan and the Driver are both taken aback. They bend down, look inside.

THERE SHE IS.

At the back of the truck, more or less where they left her. Not moving an inch, not making a sound. The pristine white shape of a woman in a sheet. Waiting patiently.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
Jesus Christ.

Kerrigan turns to him. And opens his mouth to shout.

OVER THE DRIVER'S SHOULDER,

he can see Villars approaching. Charging. A rock raised in his fist.

KERRIGAN  
No!

The Driver turns. Too late. Villars is on him, bringing the rock down. Shoving the gun barrel aside. BLAM.

It goes off. Kerrigan stumbles back, watching the other two men struggle.

Behind them, Paula Jean calmly stands up.

WHAM. Villars swings the rock into the Driver's face.

INSIDE THE TRUCK,

Paula Jean stretches. Her wrists are tied. Behind her back. But with a sickening CREAK, she raises them. Double jointed. Impossibly jointed. Her body bends. The arms go up, over her head, and come down in front of her.

Kerrigan is to pull Villars off of the Driver. Unfortunately, his interference only gives the Driver a chance to raise the shotgun.

BLAM. Villars manages to redirect the barrel... but not enough. It fires beside him. He catches part of the spread.

Paula Jean, meanwhile, steps casually out of the truck, ignoring all this. Bare feet on blacktop. She cocks her head, pops her neck.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
Wait!

The Driver has lost his cool demeanor. He's a scared man in a firefight. *He just shot someone.* He backs away, raises the gun again.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
WAIT!

BLAM. He blindfires as he races back to his truck.

Kerrigan reels. Falls. Inspects himself. *Is he shot? Am I shot?!* No. He's fine. But

VILLARS

is breathing heavily. Bleeding from his torso.

Kerrigan kneels over him, trying to ascertain the damage.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

Oh God. Oh God, Father, there's a lot of blood.

VILLARS

Where is she? Where's the girl?

**EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

The girl is running through the woods. She stops a moment and reaches up with her bound hands. Struggles momentarily with the sheet on her face. Trying to find an opening.

*There!* She's done it. The bloody sheet comes down, revealing her face at last. Somewhere in her 20s. Big eyes. Bloody nose. Cracked lips.

She GASPS for air. And starts to LAUGH. Gazing up at the stars. Free.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

The Driver is huddled by his car, fumbling with a box of shotgun shells. Reloading. Three more shots.

Villars sits up. Scoots back against the moving van, clutching his side.

VILLARS

Go. Get her.

KERRIGAN

You're shot.

VILLARS

She can *not* get away.

Kerrigan nods and starts to run.

BLAM. The Driver fires from behind his truck.

KERRIGAN

STOP SHOOTING!

DRIVER  
 Can't do that, man. Human  
 traffickers. God damn, motherfucking,  
 human traffickers!

Villars braces himself against the overturned moving truck  
 and gets to his feet.

KERRIGAN  
 Stay down.

VILLARS  
 It's just birdshot. Missed the brunt,  
 I'll be alright. On my signal, you  
 go.

KERRIGAN  
 What's your signal?

Villars doesn't answer. Just limps to the cab. Climbs up and  
 into the sideways cab.

**INT. MOVING TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars opens the glove compartment. Pulls out

A REVOLVER

and a box of bullets.

He clutches his side. Lotta blood. Winces and lifts the  
 door, peers out of the cab like he's popping out of a  
 manhole. He can see

THE DRIVER,

hiding behind his truck. Clutching his shotgun.

VILLARS  
 Hey, kid.

KERRIGAN  
 Yeah?

VILLARS  
 You trust me?

KERRIGAN  
 Yessir.

VILLARS  
 Then run.

KERRIGAN  
What, now?

VILLARS  
Yep. Now.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

Kerrigan doesn't know about this. Doesn't like it. But he does it.

As soon as he stands and runs, the Driver pops out of hiding to aim at him.

Giving Villars a clear shot. BLAM.

The shot catches the Driver just above the collarbone. BLAM another shot goes wide.

Kerrigan looks back.

KERRIGAN  
WHAT ARE YOU DOING??

VILLARS  
Get her!

Villars climbs out of the cab and circles the truck, gun at the ready.

Kerrigan takes off in Paula Jean's direction, alarmed by the violence.

Villars looms over the sputtering, pale-faced form of the Driver. He's on his back, hands up.

DRIVER  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

VILLARS  
Me too, son.

When the Driver swallows, blood gushes. This guy isn't going to make it.

Villars winces. Kneels beside him. Takes his hand.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Let's pray.



**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Kerrigan is searching frantically for any sign of Paula Jean. In the distance he hears the echo of a GUNSHOT.

He pauses. Wondering what that means, if he should go back.

Then he sees

THE DISCARDED SHEET

on the forest floor. He goes to it. Scoops it up. Paula Jean's bindings are there with it. *But where is she?*

**INT. GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

DING. The automatic doors open. And Paula Jean shuffles in.

CLINK-CLINK. The handcuff and chain are still attached to her ankle. They glistens beneath the hem of her dull and modest dress.

She gazes in awe at the fluorescent lights overhead. At the aisles and aisles of colorfully packaged junkfood.

PAULA JEAN

Oh. Hell yeah.

Moments later, BETHANY, a put upon, middle-aged night clerk, hears the RUSTLE of plastic packaging, looks up from her cellphone game.

She steps forward, aisle by aisle, searching for the source of the rustling... and the soft MOANS of pleasure that accompany them.

PAULA JEAN

is standing in the middle of the snack cake aisle, tearing into the Hostess Sno-balls. Pink coconut shavings drift down to her feet.

She rolls her eyes back in quasi-ecstasy, making the most of every bite. Washing each one down with a swig from a massive bottle of beer.

BETHANY

You gonna pay for that?

Paula Jean's back is to her. But slowly, she turns. No pupils, no irises. Her eyes are nothing but red veins and white sclera. Until she rolls them down.

That's better. More human. But the dark circles beneath her eyes remain. As does the blood trailing from her nose, mingling with marshmallow and chocolate cake crumbs.

Bethany tenses. She's used to burnouts coming in, but nothing quite like this.

The moment stretches between them, the silence filled by innocuous BLUEGRASS on the store speakers.

Paula Jean takes one last swig of beer. Wipes her mouth.

PAULA JEAN

Maybe.

She steps forward. CLINK-CLINK. Bethany steps back, noticing the handcuff on her ankle.

BETHANY

Right. Well. I'm afraid I'm gonna to have to ask you to leave.

Paula Jean stares at her. Wide-eyed. Alien. Her nostrils flare as she breathes heavily. Disappointed.

She takes another step closer.

Bethany holds her ground. Paula Jean is really in her face now. She SNIFFS. And frowns.

PAULA JEAN

'Kay.

CRASH. She drops the bottle to the linoleum floor and walks

RIGHT OVER THE SHARDS.

CRUNCH. Her foot is pierced. Smears of blood. Bethany sighs. More to clean up.

It's until Paula Jean's hand is on the door that Bethany starts to relax. *Bullet dodged...*

But then. Paula Jean stops. She doesn't turn around. Just stares through the glass. At her reflection.

She rotates her head, checking it out from all angles. Touching her throat. The bags under her eyes. Tries in vain to rub the scabbing blood from her upper lip.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Christ, you could have said something. Got a fucking blood mustache. Look like an idiot...

Then her gaze drifts. And she smiles knowingly.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 Ohh, I get it! It's the shoes, right?  
 Cause of the shoes, you're kicking me  
 out?

She turns and grins and points to the sign on the door. **No shirt, no shoes, no service.**

BETHANY  
 No, actually, it's the stealing.

Paula Jean LAUGHS. Abrupt. Amused.

PAULA JEAN  
*Stealing?* From who? From *you*? Your  
 name inn't-

She glances out the window at the gas station sign.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 -Chevron, is it?

Bethany shakes her head. Just wanting this woman to leave.

But she doesn't leave. She looks outside again, eyes searching. No sign of anyone. She calls over her shoulder.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 What is it, then?

BETHANY  
 What's what?

PAULA JEAN  
 Your name, dummy.

BETHANY  
 ...Bethany.

Paula Jean bursts out LAUGHING again. But pauses when she clocks Bethany's expression.

PAULA JEAN  
 Wait, seriously?

BETHANY  
 Yeah. Why?

Paula Jean quirks an eyebrow.

PAULA JEAN  
I don't know. No offense or nothing.  
Just sounds fake, is all.

Bethany's confusion almost overcomes her fear.

BETHANY  
No, it doesn't.

PAULA JEAN  
Mmmokay, "Bethany"! Tell you what.

She reaches up. And locks the door.

*Oh shit.* Bethany's fear returns. Big time.

Paula Jean begins fumbling with the electric **OPEN** sign.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
How do you turn this off?

BETHANY  
Please. Just go. Take what you want,  
I don't-

PAULA JEAN  
Nevermind. Let's turn all this off.  
The lights and stuff. Can you do  
that?

BETHANY  
What- What do you want?

PAULA JEAN  
You. To turn off all the lights and  
stuff. Pretend we're closed. I'll be  
honest with you, Bethany, some bad  
men are looking for me. I don't want  
to put you in danger, but... I don't  
know you all that well.

As she speaks, she notices Bethany's eyes wandering to the counter. So she moves casually in front of it. Leans against it, blocking her path.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Ah, but I know what you're thinkin.

She lays two fingers aside her head, pretending to read Bethany's mind.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
There a gun back there? Behind the  
counter?

BETHANY

No!

PAULA JEAN

Uh-huh.

BETHANY

There's not, I swear. It...  
disappeared with the guy who worked  
nights before me. They haven't  
replaced it yet.

PAULA JEAN

God damn Chevron. Is there a button  
or something, then? Panic button that  
calls the cops?

Bethany doesn't confirm or deny it.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Yeah, I don't want the cops. I got a  
husband. Parents. They're not the bad  
men who are after me but they're part  
of what I'm running from and if the  
cops get involved, they'll just...  
give me back. You understand?

Maybe she does. Bethany nods. Something is dawning on her.

BETHANY

You're from the compound.

Paula Jean grins and hops up to sit crosslegged on the  
counter. Helps herself to some of the chewing tobacco.

PAULA JEAN

Y'all know about the compound?

BETHANY

A little. People talk.

PAULA JEAN

What do people say??

She settles in, eager to hear this. Grabbing a pinch and  
chawing away. Noticing the shard of glass in her foot for  
the first time. Casually pulling it out.

BETHANY

You're religious.

PAULA JEAN

Amen.

BETHANY  
Fundamentalist.

PAULA JEAN  
Go on.

Bethany doesn't want to.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
They say we're crazy? They say we  
burn contraband, contraband being  
anything not brought into the  
community by our daddies and  
granddaddies? They say we aren't  
allowed to cut our hair, piss in a  
squat, wear pants like a man? They  
say they marry us off at 14? To  
perverts who pervert and hate  
themselves for it? Hurt themselves  
over it? Then perv over *that*? Get off  
on *that*? Cause blood's gotta run  
somewhere and if it ain't out into  
the dirt, it's down into a cock. They  
say any of those things? Am I making  
sense, Bethany?

BETHANY  
Some. I suppose.

PAULA JEAN  
You got band-aids for this?

She points to her foot. Bethany nods.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Can I have some?

BETHANY  
You can.

PAULA JEAN  
Are you gonna turn off all them  
lights and stuff?

She spits on the floor and tosses the puck of tobacco.

Bethany catches it.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

Villars leans against the Driver's truck, phone pressed  
between his ear and his shoulder while he unbuttons his  
shirt and inspects

HIS WOUNDS.

The spread didn't catch him full on. Silver pellets pepper his side. Burns and bruising. He did indeed avoid the brunt of it. Still bleeding pretty freely, though.

VILLARS

No, I know what I said but that won't be necessary anymore. We were able to right ourselves.

He's keeping the pain out of his voice as he searches the cab of the truck. Finds an old canvas bag: goggles, squirt guns... beach towels. *Perfect*. He folds one into a square. Lays it on his torso, sopping up the blood.

VILLARS (cont'd)

There'll be a slight delay but we'll be on site before sunrise. ...You have my word. ...The situation's well in hand, Your Excellency. ...Thank you.

He hangs up and lets it all out, GROANING, gritting his teeth. Dragging the Driver's toolbox out of the truck bed. Duct tape. That's what he needs.

He dials another number. Puts the phone between shoulder and ear once more as he begins wrapping the duct tape around himself, making a giant bandage.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Kerrigan stumbles forward, out of breath. His phone buzzes in his pocket.

KERRIGAN

Hello?

VILLARS (O.S.)

Where is she?

KERRIGAN

I don't know. She took off into the woods, I think she's cutting through to the road on the other side.

VILLARS (O.S.)

We need her back.

KERRIGAN

Why? So you can shoot her?

VILLARS (O.S.)  
What'd you say?

KERRIGAN  
You opened fire on that man!

VILLARS (O.S.)  
That man opened fire on you.

KERRIGAN  
I won't be party to murder.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

The Driver is sprawled in the bed of his own truck. Bullet in the head. Villars tosses a tarp over him as he speaks.

VILLARS  
But you will. You will be if we let that little girl go. This night was always gonna be rough road. Sad to say, it just got rougher. We got some some tough calls to make. Now, tomorrow morning, we can ask forgiveness but tonight? We'll do what needs be done. Won't we? Father Kerrigan?

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Kerrigan has hung up. He's reached the end of the woods. He can see the gas station and mini-mart just down the hill.

**INT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

Villars grabs a beat up leather jacket from the Driver's floorboard, throws it on to cover his blood-stained shirt before climbing behind the wheel.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Kerrigan is carefully making his way down the hill towards the gas station mini-mart.

The lights within go out. He picks up the pace.

**INT. STORAGE ROOM - GAS STATION MINI MART - NIGHT**

Bethany closes the fuse box.



PAULA JEAN  
There. That's better.

She's examining the room, fingers trailing a shelf. Grabbing  
A BOX CUTTER.

The kind with a plastic orange handle, retractable blades  
able to snap off in sections to stay sharp. CLICK-CLICK.

Bethany watches warily as Paula Jean extends the blade,  
holds it out, drags it along a series of boxes, then bags.

COFFEE BEANS

spill out, rain onto the floor in a rush.

Paula Jean mimics the sound with her mouth.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
WHOOSH. Like rain on a metal roof.

She clocks Bethany's terror. Gestures to the knife.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Oh, it's not for you. 'Less you want  
it. I wouldn't blame you, you know?  
Blame's not what I'm about for one  
and this ain't exactly the good life,  
is it? Night shift at the mini-mart.  
Still. Could be worse, believe me.  
There's nothing like a body to make  
you appreciate the small things. The  
tang of the beer, bubbles on your  
tongue. Hell, even a piece of glass  
in your foot. And the smells! All the  
smells. The sound of rain on a metal  
roof. Where I come from, we don't  
have none of that.

#### **INT. MINI-MART - CONTINUOUS**

Paula Jean leads the way back back out front. The place  
feels different in the dark. Lonelier.

She heads to a corner stocked with souvenirs. Postcards.  
Sweat pants. T-shirts emblazoned with tacky slogans.

Paula Jean grabs a pair of cheap foam flip flips from a  
rack. Slips them on.

BETHANY

They don't got smells and rain on the compound?

Paula Jean snickers, points the blade at her. *Good catch.*

PAULA JEAN

People can come from more than one place, Bethany. I contain multitudes.

She grabs two of the T-shirts. Holds them up to compare.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Whatcha think? "Women Want Me, Bass Fear Me"? Or caterpillar humping a crinkle cut fry?

Bethany stares blankly.

Paula Jean drops one shirt, keeps the other, a crude illustration just as described, accompanied by a word bubble: **"Knock it off, asshole. I'm a french fry!"**

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Agreed. Caterpillar, no contest.

She peels off her filthy dress.

Bethany turns away. Paula Jean snickers.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

What, am I giving you impure thoughts?

She pulls the shirt on. Grabs a pair of bright pink sweat pants, **ATLANTA** written down the leg. A cartoon peach.

She chats with Bethany as she uses the bundled dress to wipe more of the crusty blood from her nose.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

It's alright. All thoughts are impure. We're meant to be living in the garden like animals, aren't we? Unashamed of our nakedness, too dumb to care. But here we are. *Thinkin.* Ugh, right??

She tosses her dress onto the floor, grabs a bottle of lighter fluid from the shelf and soaks it.

Snatches a cigarette lighter as well to ignite it.

Bethany watches Paula Jean... who watches

THE DULL, MODEST DRESS

dress burn. A small, satisfied smile on her face.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

How bout you? You got any contraband  
you want to burn?

BETHANY

Maybe.

Bethany goes back to

THE COUNTER

and digs through her purse. Paula Jean makes no move to stop her, she's not even paying attention. So Bethany pauses a moment. Looks at

THE HANDGUN

on a recessed shelf below the register. She lied. The gun's still there. Hers for the taking. If she wants it.

**EXT. GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

Kerrigan closes in. He can see the flames flickering through the windows. *What the fuck is going on in there?*

He leans against a gas pump. Hesitates. Wrestles with indecision. And finally takes out his phone. Dials.

KERRIGAN

Father Villars. I got her. She's at a  
Chevron off the highway.

VILLARS (O.S.)

Share your location, I'll come to  
you.

KERRIGAN

...Alright.

He hangs up and somewhat reluctantly taps and swipes on his phone, sharing his location with Villars.

**INT. GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

Paula Jean is standing before the fire in her ridiculous new t-shirt. Gaunt face eerie in the firelight.

Bethany watches her, wrestling with her own indecision. She takes a breath. Reaches for the gun. But hesitates when she hears WHIMPERS. GRUNTS. The sound of lovemaking.

She looks around, confused. Until her eyes land on

THE BUBBLED MIRROR

in the corner of the ceiling. In its warped reflection she can see two bodies. Naked in the glow of the fire. Moving. A man and a woman, fucking in the middle of the mini-mart. A strange sight. Disturbing without context.

She cranes her neck. The aisle is empty. The mirror is reflecting something that isn't there.

PAULA JEAN

Yeah, sorry about that. I bring out the worst in people. Worst thoughts, feelings, memories. You ever date a smoker?

Bethany watches the couple in the reflection, steely-eyed. Their movements grow frantic, reaching a crescendo.

BETHANY

I have.

PAULA JEAN

So you know what it's like. Spend time with a smoker, smell like smoke.

(spits tobacco)

Stand by an open window, catch a chill. Some things have a way of... seeping in. Bad things most of all. They bubble up when I'm around. I don't always mean to do it. I'm just... not supposed to be here.

She clutches

THE BOX CUTTER

in her fist. Speaking softly. More to herself than Bethany.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

"And hell followed with him." We carry it with us.

Bethany clears her throat, finding the courage to speak.

BETHANY

My husband... He gave me this purse.

PAULA JEAN

Oh yeah?

Bethany turns it over, dumps it out. And tosses it into the flames. Watches it melt. And smoke.

Paula Jean grins. Proud.

The FIRE ALARM begins to BLARE. The sprinkler system turns on. Raining indoors.

Paula Jean lifts her head. Closes her eyes. Enjoying it. A moment of private serenity. Interrupted.

KERRIGAN (O.S.)

Paula Jean!

She opens her eyes.

PAULA JEAN

Holy shit. Is that *Kerrigan*? From the moving truck? Aw, you're young.

KERRIGAN

I need you to come with me.

PAULA JEAN

And scared.

She turns to Bethany, eyes wild, hair sticking to her face.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Sorry about this, Bethany.

Without warning, she charges Kerrigan, slashing with abandon. He holds his arm up to ward off the blows. The box cutter slices through cloth, through skin, drawing blood.

Repeatedly.

He screams and stumbles back onto the floor, tries to restrain her. But her arms twist out of joint, allowing her to squirm free from every hold. To resume her wild attacks.

She PLUNGES the blade into his shoulder.

TINK. Snaps the blade off.

CLICK-CLICK. Raises a new one.

Stab. TINK. Snaps it off. CLICK-CLICK.

Two little blades in him now. His shoulder and his thigh.

She goes for a third. But at last, he manages to kick her away, across the floor.

She lands in the corner. Springs back up in a heartbeat. Crouched, feral. Her eyes roll back, like a shark biting down. Only the whites, laced with red.

She's babbling. DEEP and GUTTURAL. Speaking in tongues.

Bethany watches in horror as Paula Jean crawls onto the prone Kerrigan, seizes his hair in her fist. Pulls his head back, exposing his throat. Puts the blade to it.

KERRIGAN

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name-

PAULA JEAN

STOP.

She pushes the box cutter close. He stops.

She caresses his throat with it. Draws the blade up, scraping stubble, like she's ready to give him a shave.

Her eyes are back to normal. Just Paula Jean again. Her voice calm and reasonable.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

You're a man on a mission, I get it.  
Do you know what that mission is?

He doesn't answer.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Yeah, that's what I thought. Well,  
I'm on a mission too. As fellow  
missionaries, I'll make you a deal.  
You say I need to go with you. I'll  
go with you. *You*, you understand? Not  
the other one.

KERRIGAN

Villars-

PAULA JEAN

No. No, names matter. He doesn't need  
a name, let's just call him the other  
one. I don't like him.

KERRIGAN

I'm not crazy about him either, but  
he's here to help.

PAULA JEAN  
It's cute how wrong you are.

KERRIGAN  
We can help you, Paula Jean, I know  
you're in there. If you can hear  
me...

Paula Jean makes a face. Turns to Bethany. *Do you believe this guy?* Then leans down next to his ear.

PAULA JEAN  
I can hear you. Can you hear me? I  
said I'll go. With you. Not the other  
one. And I ain't riding in back, all  
trussed up and bound. I ride up  
front. Proper. And I run the radio  
when the radio needs to be run. Do we  
have a deal?

Kerrigan lays his face on the wet floor. Helpless. Knife to  
his throat. *What choice does he have?*

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Going once... Going twice...

KERRIGAN  
Okay.

PAULA JEAN  
Yeah? Then let's seal it.

She winks at Bethany. *Check this out.* Licks Kerrigan's ear.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
With a kiss.

She seizes his earlobe in her teeth... and bites down.

Kerrigan SCREAMS. Pulls away. So does Paula Jean.

RIP. His earlobe is gone. Torn off. He scrambles to his  
feet, falls back against the wall.

Paula Jean approaches, shaking her head. *We're not done yet.*  
She taps her lips. Taps his. *Kiss.*

She grabs the back of his head. Sticks her tongue out.

HIS EARLOBE  
rests upon it.

She raises her eyebrows and goes in for the kiss. Passing it from her mouth to his before pulling away.

He gags. She watches closely.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
If you really mean it... you'll  
swallow.

Kerrigan blinks. She nods. *Go on.* He doesn't want to, but-  
CLICK-CLICK. Blade extended in unspoken threat.

He swallows.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Hallelujah. Bargain struck. Bethany.

BETHANY  
Y-yes?

PAULA JEAN  
You got any more of those Band-Aids?

**INT. RESTROOM - GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

Kerrigan sits, shirtless, on the sink while Paula Jean pokes at the wound in his shoulder with a pair of tweezers, seizing the snapped off box cutter blade.

PAULA JEAN  
Don't squirm, now.

KERRIGAN  
You're working so hard to undo it.  
You're the one who did it.

She gives him a look. And slowly begins to push the blade back in.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
Ah! Stop! STOP!

Point made, she plucks the blade free and tosses it onto the floor with a CLINK.

PAULA JEAN  
You handcuffed me to the back of a U-  
Haul. You wanted to send me to hell.

KERRIGAN  
I wanted to help you. I still do.



PAULA JEAN

Uh-huh. There.

She finishes plucking the blade from his thigh and begins to wrap it tightly with gauze.

KERRIGAN

Shouldn't we seal 'em up? Stitches or glue or-

PAULA JEAN

If you want to seal bacterin in there, sure. Besides, there's no time. I know you're stallin'.

He coughs uncertainly, giving himself away.

KERRIGAN

What?

PAULA JEAN

You already told your buddy where I am. I aim to be gone by the time he gets here.

KERRIGAN

He's not-

Something about her posture stops him. Her eyes lock onto his. Waiting.

PAULA JEAN

Do it. Say it. Lie to my face.

She takes his hand, almost pleading.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Lie to me, Father.

He says no more.

**INT. GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

The lights are back on, the sprinklers have stopped. Bethany is doing what she can to clean up. Using the mop to sop water off the floor.

Paula Jean and Kerrigan emerge from the bathroom, him as patched up as can be under the circumstances.

PAULA JEAN

Bethany, we're gonna need your car.

BETHANY

I can't... I can't give you my car.  
I'm off in a few hours, I've gotta  
get home, gotta pick up my kids-

Paula Jean gasps in delight.

PAULA JEAN

You got kids?? How many?

BETHANY

...Two.

PAULA JEAN

How old?

Bethany realizes she doesn't want to share any more.

Paula Jean can tell. She'll have to be "persuasive."

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Alright, I'm sure it's clear by now  
but just checkin: You know what I am?

BETHANY

...I think so.

PAULA JEAN

'Kay. I don't know how this is all  
gonna end for me, probably not good.  
Probably wind up right back where I  
came from. You know where that is? I  
ain't talking about the compound,  
now.

She nods and points down at the ground. *Hell.*

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

But the thing about me is, I'm  
stubborn. I keep crawling back. I'm  
always looking for a new... how do I  
say this? Partner?

KERRIGAN

That's enough.

PAULA JEAN

I'm talking to my friend, if you  
please. Bethany, you've been great. I  
feel like we had a thing going and  
I'm fucking it up by asking too much,  
I know that and it breaks my heart  
but that's the way it goes sometimes.  
Point is: you're a nice lady.

(MORE)

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 Bet you got real nice kids. Next time  
 I clamber up from below and I'm  
 looking for that partner... I  
 wouldn't mind taking one of them for  
 a spin.

The threat is clear. Bethany doesn't appreciate it.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 But! I'll settle for the car.

CUT TO:

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan grips the wheel, eyes forward, back straight. Paula Jean slouches beside him in the passenger seat, as promised. She's chewing tobacco, idly playing with the box cutter. Up and down. CLICK-CLICK. CLACK-CLACK. Over and over.

Kerrigan fidgets.

KERRIGAN  
 Could you not?

PAULA JEAN  
 What? Oh, right. Sorry.

She puts it in the glove compartment. Looks for something else to mess with.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 Hey, check out your co-pilot.

She grabs

THE PORCELAIN JESUS

affixed to the dashboard, yanking it free. A cheap, religious tchotchke, watching over the driver.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 What do you know, he's hollow. How's  
 that for a metaphor?

She taps it. TINK TINK.

KERRIGAN  
 Put that down.

She flips it over. A small hole in the base. Raised letters.

PAULA JEAN

"Made in Taiwan." Wow, straight from the holy land. A real relic.

KERRIGAN

*Put it down.*

Paula Jean rolls her eyes. Places the little porcelain Jesus between her legs. A pretend phallus which she pretends to jerk off.

He pointedly ignores her. So she keeps going. Pantomime ejaculation. Licking her fingers, cleaning off the pantomime jizz. Offering some to him. Attempting to force a finger into his mouth.

He jerks away. Quietly seething.

PAULA JEAN

You're a fun one. This is gonna be fun.

She tosses Jesus onto the floorboard. Idly drums on the dash. Strikes up a new conversation.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

I didn't mean what I said, by the way. I don't give a shit about Bethany's kids, I just wanted the keys without a fuss. You're welcome.

She's still got the chewing tobacco. Spits out the window. Rinses her mouth with a bottle of soda.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

So. I agreed to go with you, least you could do is tell me where we're going.

KERRIGAN

...The Diocese.

PAULA JEAN

The Diocese?

KERRIGAN

Regional headquarters for the church. Every territory has a Diocese under the authority of a Bishop. They're the ones that sent us, Villars and me, to perform the-

PAULA JEAN

Are you for real explaining the structure of the Catholic church to me? I'm talking *which* Diocese? There's, like, 195 in the US alone.

KERRIGAN

194.

She smirks and swigs her soda. She's got him on the hook.

PAULA JEAN

Actually, it's 195.

KERRIGAN

I think I would know.

PAULA JEAN

If they wanted you to.

KERRIGAN

Okay. I see. I know what you're doing.

PAULA JEAN

Cause I want you to.

(beat)

How far away is it?

KERRIGAN

Three hours, give or take.

She WHISTLES, impressed.

PAULA JEAN

Not that I mind. Good, long, night drive? That's better than any confession booth, in my opinion. Side by side in the dark for miles, eyes forward, nothing to do but talk.

KERRIGAN

"Don't engage." One of the very first rules and I've already broken it. I shouldn't even be talking to you.

PAULA JEAN

Nope. Just talking at me, right? A litany of prayers, clutching your little cross. Beating me into submission with your words and your belief-

KERRIGAN

To save the soul of an innocent girl.

PAULA JEAN

What girl?

KERRIGAN

Paula Jean-

PAULA JEAN

Father K. I *am* Paula Jean.

He does his best not to react to this claim.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

That's what you don't get, won't even try to understand. I spent my whole life in that place. Suffocating long before they put that sheet over my head. Ask questions, seek knowledge: met with punishment. Feel urges, seek pleasure: met with punishment. Punishment! For being human. What a way to fuckin live, you know? It breaks your will, breaks you down. Sometimes inches at a time, sometimes miles all at once, but that's the point and its every day. I think you know something about that. Your faith-

KERRIGAN

That's not my faith. What went on there, what you're describing is not-

PAULA JEAN

-Your faith wears all kinds of masks. Some are monstrous, frightening to look upon, all that mess. Others look... almost human. Almost kind.

She reaches for his chin, turns his face toward hers.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

But they're all hiding the same thing underneath: Fear and hate.

KERRIGAN

"It's cute how wrong you are."

She gives him a wide eyed gasp at being quoted. And starts poking at this wounded thigh.

PAULA JEAN

Hey. *Hey*. What two things you feeling right now? I know you want to help me. Save me. That's sweet. But you're too late. Boy, I've already been saved.

He shakes his head, resisting the urge to engage further.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

I prayed. Every night for God to take me away, take me home, cut my life short if living's such a sin. He didn't answer. You know who did?

Kerrigan doesn't answer either.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Fine then. *You* sit there and get talked at for once. Another voice answered, from another place of torment. We called to each other, we came to each other, because that's what we wanted. Both of us. Now we're together. "We" is I. I am Paula Jean, I am the thing in the pit that heard her pleas, no need for distinction. We don't just share a body, we share memories, thoughts, feelings-

KERRIGAN

You're good. The way people talk, I figured it'd be all gnashing teeth and lashing tongues. Curses, crude and violent. But your blasphemy is subtle.

PAULA JEAN

Thank you.

KERRIGAN

You're right. Fear and hate, they're part of the equation. But that's just the start, it's not the endgame. Christ doesn't teach us that those thing don't exist. He teaches us how to how to overcome them. To be better than. I think deep down you know that. I think deep down you want that. Otherwise, why come with me?

She shrugs. They ride in silence for a long time.

PAULA JEAN  
 Maybe I thought... I could save you.

She gives him a smile. Genuine and warm.

It chills him to the bone.

**INT. GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

Bethany has resumed her attempts to clean up. She wrings out the mop and laughs to herself. A laugh of relief and disbelief. *What a fucking night it's been.*

VILLARS  
 Sonofagun, what happened here?

She jumps. Turns. *Where the hell did he come from?*

Villars hides his injuries well, handsome in his worn leather coat.

BETHANY  
 Fire alarm went off. Unexpectedly.

VILLARS  
 Tough break. Sorry about your stock.

BETHANY  
 Hell, it's not mine, it's Chevron's. Bet they're insured.

VILLARS  
 Wise bet. Sorry to interrupt, I'm just looking for a friend of mine. Young man in a blue workshirt. He been through here?

Bethany isn't sure how to answer. She sets the mop back in the bucket and makes her way toward the counter.

BETHANY  
 Blue workshirt... Yeah, I think so.

VILLARS  
 You think so? Been a busy night?

BETHANY  
 Not really. There was a guy come through. Left a few minutes ago.

VILLARS  
 Was he alone?



BETHANY

...I don't really remember.

VILLARS

You don't remember a few minutes ago?

He's condescending. Cornering her. She doesn't like it.

BETHANY

He was with a girl. They left. A few minutes ago. If you leave now, maybe you can catch 'em.

VILLARS

Yeah, maybe.

(beat)

You got security cameras around here?

BETHANY

I can't show you any footage.

VILLARS

No, I know. But if you did, that's what I'd see, right? Guy in a blue workshirt. With a girl, passing through. Fire alarm. Going off unexpectedly.

His eyes trail to the keyring hanging from her belt.

BETHANY

That's what you'd see. Look, time's wastin' if you want to catch up-

VILLARS

I know.

BLAM. Without warning, Villars draws his handgun, fires at her, bullet catching her in the chest.

Bethany goes down, behind the counter. Hyperventilating. Panicked. But alive.

Villars sighs.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Shit. Ma'am? Did I get you?

He can hear her SOBBING. Wheezing.

But he can't see her reaching for her own concealed gun.

VILLARS (cont'd)

...Ma'am?

When she doesn't respond, he begins to approach, gun raised.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
I meant this to be quick. Merciful.  
I'm coming around, you gonna let me  
be merciful?

BETHANY (O.S.)  
O-okay. Okay...

VILLARS  
Alright.

He creeps closer. Closer.

Bethany squints. Tears in her eyes. She grips the gun. And leans out.

BLAM BLAM BLAM! She fires wildly, no clue what she's doing. Still plenty dangerous.

Villars reels back, scrambling for cover.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Whoa whoa whoa!

He peers out from the aisle at the counter. Takes aim. And FIRES through the base.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTER,

Bethany SCREAMS as bullets punch through the cheap wood.

She curls up, trying to avoid the shots. Waits for Villars to stop.

Silence. Bluegrass on the store speakers.

Bethany's in fight or flight mode. All she wants to do is get out of here. Get home. She eyes

THE FRONT DOOR.

*She can make it. She can try.*

So she bolts. Firing toward Villars as she goes. BLAM BLAM BLAM. Until she's empty.

That's what he was waiting for. He emerges from cover, clutching his wounded side. Shuffles toward the door, watching her flee across the parking lot.

BLAM. He fires.

PING. It hits the concrete at Bethany's feet. She SCREAMS, running faster.

*Shit.* Villars steps forward. Uses both hands to grip his gun, steady his shot. He tries again.

BLAM. PING.

Bethany is wailing in terror, running for her life.

Villars is mildly annoyed. Lining up one more shot.

BLAM. THUNK.

**EXT. GAS STATION MINI MART - NIGHT**

Bethany falls. Hit in the side. She rolls across the blacktop. Lands on her back, staring up at the night sky. GASPING for breath.

BETHANY

Oh God. Please, God, if you're there...

VILLARS (O.S.)

He is.

Villars is there too. He kneels beside her.

VILLARS

But he won't help you now. You're caught up in something. Something secret, something sacred, you understand? That girl... she's the bearer of bad news. So to speak.

BETHANY

They're in my car! A white Volvo. I saw them, okay? I saw them both. She's not normal-

VILLARS

Shh. That's the problem. Nobody's supposed to see. Nobody's supposed to know.

(beat)

I offered you mercy. Didn't I?

She seizes on that, hopeful.

BETHANY

Y-yes. Yes, you did!

Exasperated, he reaches for the keychain on her belt.

VILLARS

And you spit in my face. Didn't you?

She's dumbstruck. Crestfallen. Watches him stand and walk away, leaving her choking on blood.

VILLARS (cont'd)

You think on that.

**INT. GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

Villars enters, in a bad mood. He sorts through the keys, finds the one to the manager's office.

**INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - GAS STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT**

There it is. A shitty old security hub: black and white monitor. Digital recording box, not much bigger than a VCR, complete with a tangled trail of wires.

He finds the turn key on the keyring. Unlocks the recording box and yanks it free.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars tosses the recording box into the passenger seat, takes out his phone.

Kerrigan's location is still shared with him. All it takes is a few swipes to pull it up. They haven't gotten far.

Villars puts the truck in gear and pulls out.

BETHANY

is visible through the front windshield, trying to crawl out of the road.

Villars shakes his head. *What a shame.*

A calmly guides the truck- THUMP-THUMP -over her body.

He blesses himself, a dutiful sign of the cross. Then adjusts the rearview mirror. One last look.

**EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT**

Kerrigan leans against the car, filling it up.

Paula Jean remains in the passenger seat, picking scabs from her lips.

As Kerrigan waits, he scans the vast parking lot. Rows of spaces, mostly empty. Rows of headlights, some aglow, some on the blink.

He grows alert when he sees

A MAN

stumble into the light. Yards away, hard to get a good look at. Shirtless and barefoot in a pair of jeans. Sobbing. Falling to his knees.

Kerrigan makes no move to intervene, only watches in mute horror as the man shoves two fingers into his mouth.

His back arches. His chest heaves. He's making himself vomit. Successfully. The contents of his stomach spill out onto the concrete.

The man stares at the sick for a moment, tears in his eyes, before clasping his hands together. An attitude of prayer.

There are tears in Kerrigan's eyes now too. A look of haunted recognition. He knows this man, like he knew the voice on the radio. It's him.

PAULA JEAN  
Shake it off, Father K!

He does, startled by the sound of her voice. The sight of her ankle propped in the window, handcuff dangling.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
You got a key for this or what?

He searches his pockets for the key and unlocks her. She watches him slip it back in, clearly distracted, searching for the apparition that's no longer there.

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)  
Hey, look. They got food.

KERRIGAN  
So?

PAULA JEAN  
Don't tell me you're not hungry.

CLICK. The tank is full. He replaces the pump.

KERRIGAN

Nah. Still full-up on earlobe.

Her smile turns half-mischievous, half-guilty. *Touche.*

PAULA JEAN

What about me, don't I get a last meal? I know you gotta go inside to pay. What's it hurt to pay for a couple pancakes too? Country ham. Coffee...

He climbs back in, pointedly silent.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

What's the best meal you ever ate? I mean, if you knew you had, what-  
(checks the clock)  
-two, two and a half hours left on earth? One last chance to taste one last thing... what would it be?

KERRIGAN

Nothing they serve at a place like this.

She grabs his hand as he puts the car in gear.

PAULA JEAN

Kerrigan.

Her eyes are pleading. Desperate. Sad.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

I'll take what I can get. Please.

**INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - MOMENTS LATER**

Paula Jean is practically dancing in her seat, scanning the menu with infectious delight.

PAULA JEAN

OhmyGodOhmyGod. They got a fried peanut butter and banana sandwich. That's what Elvis used to eat. You ever had one?

KERRIGAN

Can't say I have.

PAULA JEAN

You can after tonight. -HOLY SHIT!

She points to the menu.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Orange milkshake. Let's do it. You  
want to share or you want your own?

KERRIGAN  
I'll stick with water.

PAULA JEAN  
Why? You think it's holier to deny  
yourself than enjoy yourself?

KERRIGAN  
Or I just don't feel like a  
milkshake.

The WAITRESS arrives, going through the motions.

WAITRESS  
Y'all ready?

PAULA JEAN  
You bet your ass-

She checks her nametag: **Linda**

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Linda. Two of the fried peanut butter  
sandwiches. Two hashbrowns. Two  
orange shakes.

Kerrigan clears his throat. Somewhat shyly.

KERRIGAN  
One orange, one chocolate.

Paula Jean grins. Reaches out to slap him on the shoulder.

PAULA JEAN  
There he is! *There he is!* "One  
orange, one chocolate." Fuck yeah.  
Hook this brave soul up, two cherries  
on top of his, please, ma'am, thank  
you.

Linda laughs in spite of herself. They're getting looks from  
other tables.

KERRIGAN  
Alright, calm down.

PAULA JEAN  
You never answered my question, by  
the way. Best thing you ever ate.

KERRIGAN  
I'd have to think about it.

PAULA JEAN  
We got time.

He sighs. Thinks.

KERRIGAN  
French toast. How's that?

PAULA JEAN  
French toast?

KERRIGAN  
Yep.

PAULA JEAN  
That's bread dipped in eggs.

KERRIGAN  
Yep.

PAULA JEAN  
Who made it?

KERRIGAN  
My mom.

PAULA JEAN  
And you loved her.

KERRIGAN  
...That's complicated.

PAULA JEAN  
Ooh.

That gets her attention. She perks up.

Kerrigan shakes his head, not falling for her Hannibal  
Lecter routine.

KERRIGAN  
Unh-uh. Not going there.



PAULA JEAN

You know, you'll only meet a handful of people in your life who actually care about what you have to say. Who ask and mean it-

KERRIGAN

I'd been sick. Flu, I think. Couldn't keep anything down. Felt like it went on for weeks. When I was finally coming out of it, she asked me what I wanted-

PAULA JEAN

Mom's French toast.

KERRIGAN

Nothing's ever tasted better than mom's french toast that day.

PAULA JEAN

Right on. That's really more about the context than the meal, though, right?

KERRIGAN

Guess so.

PAULA JEAN

Context is everything. Memory's everything.

Linda returns with their shakes. Kerrigan's has two cherries. Linda is clearly proud of herself, giving him a bashful smile before walking away.

Paula Jean pushes her orange milkshake across the table.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Will you try?

KERRIGAN

I don't love oranges.

PAULA JEAN

I figured. Will you still try?

He rolls his eyes. Takes a sip.

She looks into his eyes. Gauging his reaction.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Will you remember this moment when I'm gone? After you send me away?

(MORE)

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 Will you think of me, next time you  
 see an orange milkshake on a menu  
 somewhere? -Father, look at me.

He doesn't. Not for long.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 You think, some day, you'll order one  
 for yourself? And it'll taste just  
 like this night? All strange and  
 haunted, when you and I were on the  
 road together, moving between  
 everything that came before and  
 everything that's yet to come? And  
 you were *young*. And handsome. And you  
 felt so fucking brave-

He finally looks up. Eyes cold as he can make them.

KERRIGAN  
 No.

PAULA JEAN  
 ...'Kay. Forgive my saying that's a  
 God damn shame. I would. If I were  
 you.

She claps. Spell broken, moment over. Onto the next thing.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 Hey, look. They got showers.

**INT. SHOWERS - TRUCK STOP - NIGHT**

Paula Jean's pink sweats and caterpillar T-shirt are neatly  
 folded on a bench.

She luxuriates in the rush of the hot water for a moment.  
 Then pauses, sensing something amiss.

**INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - LATER**

Kerrigan sits alone at the table, finishing a coffee,  
 keeping his eyes on

THE DOOR TO THE WOMEN'S SHOWERS.

LINDA  
 Whenever you're ready, hon.

She drops off the check. He notices the tears in her eyes.

KERRIGAN  
Everything alright?

LINDA  
Hm? Oh. No, I'm fine, it's just your  
friend... she reminds me someone.

She shakes her head, embarrassed. Ashamed.

KERRIGAN  
Who's that?

LINDA  
Someone I try not to think about.

She's off before he can say more. Another victim of Paula  
Jean's corruptive presence.

Kerrigan checks the clock on the wall, **1 AM**, then returns  
his attention to the showers. Growing nervous. Getting ready  
to check on her when

VILLARS

sits down across from him. Blocking his view.

KERRIGAN  
Father Villars!

He's shocked to see him. Begins to stand.

Villars signals him to stay.

VILLARS  
Sit. Where is she?

Kerrigan hesitates, reluctant to admit it.

KERRIGAN  
The showers.

VILLARS  
*What?* The hell is wrong with you,  
she'll run-

KERRIGAN  
I don't think so. Not from me.

VILLARS  
No? You two got a special bond?

KERRIGAN

There's only one way in or out. I've got my eye on it. But if she comes out and sees you-

VILLARS

She'll know the jig is up. No more bullshit, daddy's home.

KERRIGAN

She's coming of her own free will, there's no need-

VILLARS

Then she's got a scheme. Which you're now part of, playing into. Why the hell do you think we're not supposed to talk to 'em?

Kerrigan swallows, still cowed by this man, but determined to do things his way.

KERRIGAN

Look. I don't know about you, but I'm not looking to cause a scene here.

They glance around the diner. Not packed, but populated. A few burly truckers. A handful of teenagers. The wait staff.

VILLARS

All these people seen her face?

KERRIGAN

They've seen a girl on the road, stopping for dinner. We force her to go and they'll see a lot more. She won't go quiet. Now, I can get her to the Diocese.

VILLARS

Change of plans. We're not going to the Diocese.

That unsettles Kerrigan.

KERRIGAN

Where are we going?

VILLARS

A secure location. Where I'll perform the Rite.

KERRIGAN

How far?

VILLARS

Doesn't matter, you won't be there.

KERRIGAN

Why?? You can't do it alone.

VILLARS

Father Kerrigan, tonight you've shown your color and your character. You've been found wanting. The Diocese will send someone else.

KERRIGAN

...Which Diocese?

VILLARS

What's that supposed to mean? You know damn well which Diocese.

Kerrigan isn't so sure about that.

VILLARS (cont'd)

You don't trust me now?

Kerrigan isn't so sure he does.

VILLARS (cont'd)

But you trust her. Funny how that works, isn't it?

KERRIGAN

I can get her there. Without violence.

Villars notices his bandaged ear.

VILLARS

Seems a bit late for-

KERRIGAN

I can get here there. If *you* trust *me*.

Villars sizes him up, intimidating as hell. He picks up Kerrigan's coffee. Takes the last swallow.

VILLARS

It's a church. Out of use but still standing. 20 miles or so uproad, dirt path on the right, just past the county line. Take it, all the way to the end. It's off on its own. Abandoned. Quiet.

KERRIGAN

Alright.

VILLARS

I'll head on then, meet you there.  
But I'll need you to swear to it.  
Swear you'll bring her.

KERRIGAN

I swear.

VILLARS

On your immortal soul. On the blood  
of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,  
do you swear?

KERRIGAN

I swear.

Villars pulls out a rosary. Slaps it into Kerrigan's hands.  
covers them with his own.

VILLARS

Let's hear it one more time.

KERRIGAN

I swear on my immortal soul. In the  
name of Christ himself. I will bring  
her to you.

VILLARS

Amen.

Villars stands and strolls out.

Kerrigan exhales.

**EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT**

Villars leaves the diner behind, limping to his truck,  
parked around the side.

He pauses, hand on the door for support.

VILLARS

Lord, give me strength.

With a GRUNT, he unbuttons his shirt. With a pocket knife,  
he frees the duct tape from his waist.

The beach towel he'd been using as a bandage hits the  
pavement with a SPLAT. Completely sodden.

The wounds are beginning to clot, though, the flow lessening. He grabs another towel from the bag behind the seat. Fresh dressings.

**INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER**

He slumps into the driver's seat, staring straight ahead.

There's an emptiness to his gaze. His breathing is a little rough, a little slow. Everything that's happened tonight is beginning to catch up with him.

The radio CRACKLES. Static. Funny. The car's not even on.

Villars holds his breath. And notices he's no longer alone in the car.

A BODY

sits beside him. A pale shape covered with clear, plastic sheeting. A shower curtain perhaps. The plastic is fogged with condensation, mercifully obscuring most of it from view.

And the body is small. A boy. A DEAD BOY.

Villars refuses to look at it. Continues staring ahead.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Unh-uh. I've been down this road before, I know how it works. You ain't there.

The body beneath the plastic sheeting moves. Slightly. The radio CRACKLES with static once more. A voice breaks through. A young voice.

DEAD BOY (O.S.)

...no, I'm not... I'm not anywhere anymore... am I?

VILLARS

That's not true. That's not true, you're up in Heaven.

DEAD BOY (O.S.)

Am I? ...I guess you'll never know... You'll never see it...

Villars grips the wheel. A tear on his cheek. Expression steely as ever.

VILLARS

I made my peace with that a long time ago. We all have, that's how we do what we do.

DEAD BOY (O.S.)

...And what is that?

VILLARS

What needs be done. God's will.

DEAD BOY (O.S.)

...what you did with me... Was that God's will?

Villars closes his eyes. Lowers his head. Ignoring the voice on the radio and the body beside him.

VILLARS

Lord, take this evil from my sight. I don't presume to beg forgiveness, I just beg to be of use. Even the damned have a role to play, don't we? Allow me and my brethren play it.

(beat)

May we see the end begin.

The body is gone. The radio is silent. Villars collects himself, clearing his head. Just in time.

KERRIGAN AND PAULA JEAN

are leaving the diner. Heading for their car.

When they pull out, Villars waits a beat. Then follows.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Paula Jean watches Kerrigan drive, window down, his hair in the wind.

HIS LIPS

move, mouthing the words to another sugary pop SONG on the radio. He isn't even aware that he's doing it.

She smiles. Amused. Affectionate.

PAULA JEAN

So. Sorry I stabbed you a bunch, bit off your earlobe back there, made you swallow it. Sometimes you gotta put people in their place, you know?

(MORE)



PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Plus, we didn't really know each other yet-

KERRIGAN  
I'll survive.

PAULA JEAN  
I reckon you will. Stronger for it too, probably. You're welcome.

She keeps staring. Smirking. Now he's aware of it and uncomfortable. Eventually, he snaps.

KERRIGAN  
What?

PAULA JEAN  
How long had it been since anyone kissed you? Mom doesn't count.

He seems to blush a little.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
That wasn't your first, was it?

KERRIGAN  
No.

PAULA JEAN  
Aw shit, I'm sorry. They're not all like that, gross and violent. Some are. Not all.

KERRIGAN  
It wasn't my first kiss!

PAULA JEAN  
Okay. Chill out.  
(beat)  
It was ours.

He switches off the radio. They ride in silence for a beat. There's something on his mind. Something he wants to ask. She waits for him to find the courage.

KERRIGAN  
Can I ask you something? What's it like? Hell.

PAULA JEAN  
You really wanna know?

She takes a moment to gather her thoughts.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 It's... more a feeling than a place.  
 I mean, it's not like this.

She pounds the dashboard.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 External stimulation for a physical  
 body. It's... like a dream? A  
 terrible dream you don't even know  
 you're in. 'Til you wake up. Time  
 doesn't pass, time's just more  
 external stimulation. Can't describe  
 it, there's no words for it. 'Til you  
 claw your way out. Into a mind with  
 words. But even then, words fail. And  
 all this-

She taps the dashboard again. *The physical world.*

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 All this starts to drown it out, make  
 you forget. To the point where you  
 feel like, 'it couldn't have been as  
 bad all that, could it?' And you tell  
 yourself 'no, it couldn't.' And you  
 believe it. 'Til someone sends you  
 back.

He's completely unaware of her accusatory gaze, lost in her  
 description, eyes on

THE UNFOLDING ROAD.

KERRIGAN  
 ...I think I've felt it.

PAULA JEAN  
 I think so too.

Time passes. He's lulled into vulnerability by the soothing  
 sound of tires rolling down the uneven blacktop, the  
 intermittent zoom of passing cars.

KERRIGAN  
 Almost sent myself there once.

She nods in understanding.

And then he remembers who, what, he's talking to.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
 Villars warned me about you. He said  
 you'd use my shame against me.  
 (MORE)

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

Do you see it too? The things you make me see?

PAULA JEAN

In a way. Hard not to, most times, y'all wear your shame so loud. But that's a coat you choose yourselves. Mirrors only reflect what you put in front of 'em, right? You took some pills one time, so what? You call it 'shame'-

KERRIGAN

I tried to die.

PAULA JEAN

And what happened?

KERRIGAN

...I didn't. I panicked. Fell on my knees in the parking lot...

PAULA JEAN

And then?

He swallows. Gives an answer that feels rehearsed.

KERRIGAN

Then I found God. That's the night when-

PAULA JEAN

Nah. Nope. See, that's the part you oughtta be ashamed of. Let me let you in on some 'secret knowledge': God? He wasn't there that night. He didn't shove his fingers down your throat, didn't pull you to your feet. You did. Shit, you got so low you didn't want to *breathe* no more. ...And then you got back up. You and me both, we climbed out of the abyss. Difference is how we feel about that.

He can feel her eyes on him. Prodding and judgmental.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

You want to know if I see your shame? I do. But I'll be damned if I'm gonna share it.

Kerrigan wrestles with himself. With the truth. *Should he tell her? Should he take her to the church?*

KERRIGAN

Listen. Paula Jean. They want me to take you-

WHAM. Something slams into their car from behind.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars turns on the headlights now that he's upon them. High beams. Bright and sudden.

His RADIO is at full volume. More evangelical raving.

RADIO PREACHER

"He that believeth not is condemned already!" We owe *nothing* to the nonbelievers! God has hardened their hearts for a reason just as he hardened Pharaoh's-

**EXT. FARM ROAD - NIGHT**

WHAM. Villars' truck catches up to Bethany's car again. Bumps it. Tires SQUEAL. The car swerves.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan fights for control, speeding up.

KERRIGAN

What the hell??

PAULA JEAN

That'd be the other one. I tried to warn ya.

WHAM. The car rattles.

A cheery RINGTONE plays. Kerrigan's phone.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

You gonna get that?

He snatches it up. Checks the ID. **Father Villars**

KERRIGAN

Villars! Stop! I told you, I'm bringing her.

Paula Jean clocks this. Looks a little stung.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars is keeping pace, riding Kerrigan's ass down the empty stretch of road, phone to his ear.

VILLARS

Yeah, but he's in your head now, son. You're compromised. No shame in it, it's what they do. It's your innocence she wants.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan grits his teeth, listening. Villars speaks loud enough for Paula Jean to overhear.

VILLARS (O.S.)

Stop the car.

PAULA JEAN

Don't stop the car.

She clutches Kerrigan's wrist. Desperate.

**EXT. FARM ROAD - NIGHT**

WHAM. Taillights SHATTER. Bethany's car careens off the road momentarily, taking out part of an old wooden fence before righting itself.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars watches with satisfaction, keeping his voice calm.

VILLARS

I'd hoped to win you over to our way of thinking but you didn't even give me a chance. Wheels are in motion, Father. To stand in their way is to be ground beneath them.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan is in a panic, voice rising.

KERRIGAN

What wheels?? What- Father. Help me understand.

PAULA JEAN  
Kerrigan, hang up. Don't listen to  
him. Don't talk-

KERRIGAN  
Who is this girl?

PAULA JEAN  
You know who I am.

VILLARS (O.S.)  
We're not doing this over the phone.  
You want to talk, you pull over,  
we'll talk man to man.

Paula Jean looks truly uncertain for the first time. She  
knows she has to do something, say something...

KERRIGAN  
Why are we transporting her off-site?  
You tell me that, first. Why are you  
willing to go to such lengths? This  
is not protocol. It isn't normal. Who  
is she? What's so important-

PAULA JEAN  
I'm pregnant.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

VILLARS  
She's the mother of the Antichrist.

They say it almost in unison. Bombshell dropping on Kerrigan  
from two directions at once.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
How's that? That explanation enough?

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - CAR**

Kerrigan takes a beat to process. Turns to Paula Jean.

KERRIGAN  
Is that true?

PAULA JEAN  
Hang up and I'll tell you.

KERRIGAN  
Is it true??

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars reaches into the glove compartment. Pulls out the revolver.

VILLARS

You hang up on me, I'll know where your loyalties lie. And take appropriate action.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan has to decide. *Stop the car or keep going...*

Paula Jean can tell he's on the precipice.

PAULA JEAN

Do you trust him?

KERRIGAN

I don't trust you!

PAULA JEAN

Fair enough. But faith's a choice at the end of the day. Who would you *rather* believe?

WHAM. Read ended again. Kerrigan's head hits the steering wheel. Villars lays on the HORN.

VILLARS (O.S.)

You still there, Father Kerrigan? I meant what I said, God crossed our paths for a reason. You're right where you're supposed to be. The stakes are higher than you know-

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan hangs up. Grabs the wheel, twists it hard and SLAMS THE BRAKES.

**EXT. FARM ROAD - NIGHT**

Bethany's car spins out, tires smoking, until it's facing the opposite direction.

And takes off.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars wasn't prepared for that. He fumbles with the phone, dropping it from his ear, scrambling for control.

VILLARS  
Shit. God DAMMIT!

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan grips the wheel, decision made. He's thrown in with Paula Jean for now. He makes a quick turn onto a side road,

SPEEDOMETER

rising steadily. Recklessly.

PAULA JEAN

smirks to herself in the passenger seat.

KERRIGAN  
Talk!

PAULA JEAN  
Shouldn't we wait until we're-

KERRIGAN  
TALK!

PAULA JEAN  
Okay. Jeez. A girl opens up her body, invites in a demon, sometimes that demon doesn't come alone. I'm no virgin, but... timing doesn't make sense otherwise. So yeah, I'm carrying the result of our unholy union. Going on six weeks.

Kerrigan breezes past a stop sign, nearly colliding with another car. A HORN blares.

**EXT. CROSSROADS - NIGHT**

Villars' truck shoots out moments later, clipping the car Kerrigan managed to avoid, knocking it aside.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars stalls out. The DRIVER of the other car exits his vehicle, shouting angrily.



Villars nearly runs him down as he pulls back onto the road, desperate to catch up.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

KERRIGAN

*Is it the Antichrist?*

She shrugs. *I dunno.*

PAULA JEAN

That's up to the kid. Free will and all. But I can tell you, it's what *they* want.

KERRIGAN

They who?

PAULA JEAN

Your friend. And his friends. The Diocese.

KERRIGAN

The Diocese doesn't want-

PAULA JEAN

I'm not talking about the hundred and ninety-four you know. I'm talking about-

KERRIGAN

The hundred ninety-fifth.

PAULA JEAN

The Hidden Diocese. Men of the cloth, just like you. -Turn here.

He yanks the wheel. They both sway.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Deacons, priests, bishops. Probably not many but more than enough to cause trouble. They meet in secret, share beliefs. What you might call *radical* beliefs.

KERRIGAN

They want to kill the child.

Paula Jean laughs out loud.

PAULA JEAN  
 Are you crazy? They're Christians!  
 They don't want to kill it. They want  
 to raise it.

BANG. The rear windshield SHATTERS. BANG.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Villars is right behind them, leaning out the window as he closes in. FIRING.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan keeps low, losing his cool, trying to steer.

Paula Jean continues chatting, shaking her head in dismay.

PAULA JEAN  
 Cast me out, keep the kid. Can you  
 believe it? Send my body back home,  
 most likely. Returned to the clutches  
 of the commune while they orchestrate  
 the endtimes or whatever stupid  
 bullshit they think they can-

BANG! Kerrigan GRUNTS. Grabs his right arm. Blood. He's hit.

Paula Jean sneers and climbs into the rear. She lowers the back seat, gaining access to the trunk. Searches it.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 Keep going.

KERRIGAN  
 He shot me!

PAULA JEAN  
 I saw that. Guy's a real sonofabitch.

She grabs a tire iron.

Rolls down the window.

Leans out. BANG.

She ducks back in, narrowly avoiding the shot.

Then leans out again. And hurls the tire iron.

**INT. TRUCK - SIMULTANEOUS**

The tire iron whistles through the air. Collides with Villars' windshield -CRASH- spiderwebbing it.

Villars SHOUTS in rage. He can't see shit now.

He's all over the road. *Gotta get rid of the cracked windshield*. He fires into it, shattering the safety glass. Knocking it aside with the pistol.

No windshield at all now.

But a clear shot. He takes it. BANG... BANG.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Panicked, desperate, Kerrigan turns off the road, attempting to cut through a field.

KERRIGAN

Shit! Hold on!

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Rows and rows of earthen mounds. Freshly planted crops in symmetrical lines.

The car clears one mound. Then another. But it's losing momentum. By the third one...

It's stuck. Tires spin, sending up gouts of mud.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan keeps trying. The engine ROARS, mud flies. But he's only digging in deeper.

KERRIGAN

Shit. Shit, I messed up. I'm sorry. I always fucking mess up!

THROUGH THE WINDOW,

he can see Villars pulling to a stop. Staggering out of the truck. Limping toward them. Gun in hand.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

No. No, no, no. Alright, come on, we gotta-

But when he turns to face her in the back seat, he sees that she's frozen in place.

HER EYES

have rolled back to white again. Her muscles are locked, in the throes of a seizure. Through clenched teeth, she WHISPERS. Words he doesn't understand, a voice too deep, too... layered.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

Hey! Hey, come on, Paula Jean, don't do this now.

He shakes her, trying to rouse her from the trance.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

I believe you, alright? That means we've gotta go. Paul Jean! Please, you-

WHAM. Something SLAMS into the window, full force. He jumps, startled, certain it was a bullet. Certain he's dead.

But he's not. It wasn't. Villars is still stalking toward them, not firing yet.

And there's a bloody smear on the glass. *What the hell?*

WHAM! It happens again, just as he tries to pick Paula Jean up. WHAM! Another one, another

BIRD.

A crow. It flew right into the window. Destroyed itself.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

What in God's name-

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Villars pauses. Cocks his head. He can hear them in the darkness. CAWING. SQUAWKING.

FLAPPING. He can just make out

A MASSIVE FLOCK

moving in from the trees across the farm.

He backs up a step. The CAWING grows louder.

He tries to tun.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan shields Paul Jean's body with his own as the flock arrives. Swallowing the car.

The interior dims. There's nothing to see through the windows now. Just feathers, clambering bodies.

The SOUND OF WINGS. The repetitive THUDS of their kamikaze dives. And a few desperate BLASTS from Villars' gun.

Followed by his muffled SCREAMS.

Paula Jean drools and spasms beneath Kerrigan, chanting all the while. Voice rising as the birds SHRIEK.

The windows shatter, allowing them to spill in. Kerrigan SCREAMS now too.

The world disappears.

CUT TO:

**BLACK**

Darkness. A void.

But gradually, there's movement. Bodies, human bodies, slick and inky black, like tar. Like oil. Writhing in a mass. An organic, orgiastic undulation.

The same dreamy formation Kerrigan glimpsed in the shadows of the silo where they first encountered Paula Jean.

*Are they souls? Is this hell? A visualization of the feeling Paula Jean described?*

Kerrigan stares upward.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

He's sitting on an earthen floor, back to a wooden wall. An abandoned barn in the blue moonlight.

The ceiling is high. Lost to darkness. A darkness filled with those fleeting, hallucinatory shapes.

From somewhere nearby, he can hear Paula Jean. SINGING.

PAULA JEAN

"...Pushing the day... into the  
nighttime... somewhere between the  
two, we start to see...

Her silhouette is stark in the doorway, staring at the sky.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

"...Mad about you (mad about you)...  
Lost in your eyes (reason aside)-"

She stops suddenly. But doesn't turn around.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

There he is.

His head's in a fog. It's all a blur. The shadowy bodies  
above him are gone. Just the rotten ceiling of the barn.

KERRIGAN

What happened?

PAULA JEAN

We got away.

KERRIGAN

Villars?

PAULA JEAN

Didn't see a body but I didn't look  
hard. Dragged you as far as I could.  
You're welcome.

She stands and starts over, grabbing an old oil lamp from  
the wall, lights it with the cigarette lighter she took from  
Bethany's gas station.

The glow illuminates the space. Casts flickering shadows.

THE PORCELAIN JESUS

from Bethany's dashboard is beside him. Watching over him. A  
strange detail. The sight makes him slightly uncomfortable.

KERRIGAN

Okay. So, what now?

PAULA JEAN

I was wondering that myself.  
Personally, I'm gonna run, get the  
hell out of Dodge, I recommend you do  
the same before they find you.

KERRIGAN

The "hidden diocese." You expect me to believe all that?

PAULA JEAN

Doesn't matter what I expect-

KERRIGAN

Christian men, raising the Antichrist?

PAULA JEAN

It may shock you to hear this, but Christian men do lot of things-

KERRIGAN

What's to gain there? Why would they want that?

PAULA JEAN

Because they want to be important.

She ruffles his hair.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Same as all men. See, this is the problem with prophecy, you tell the true believers something's gonna happen, you get three responses: guys who want to stop it from happening, guys who want to let it happen... and, these are the dangerous ones, guys who want to *make* it happen.

She kneels beside him. Bunches up the bottom of her crass XL t-shirt and licks it. Like an exhausted mother cleaning ice cream from her kids face, she dabs at his wounds. Seeping scratches from bird beaks and broken glass.

KERRIGAN

And these men, men of God, they're courting Armageddon?

PAULA JEAN

Who wouldn't want to be a character in their favorite book? They want to see it happen on their terms, in their lifetimes.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

The pristine mounds of crops have been disturbed. Tire tracks. Footprints. Feathers. Dozens upon dozens of dead birds. And beyond them,

VILLARS.

In a gully by the trees. A bloody, tattered mess.

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)  
They want to be a part of it.

The mess *moves*. It BREATHES.

Villars opens his eyes. The right one is red, infused with blood from a ruptured vessel.

Slowly, he sits up. Alive. And furious.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Paul Jean is still cleaning Kerrigan's face in the lamplight, the base of her shirt red with blood.

KERRIGAN  
How do you know all this?

PAULA JEAN  
I know a lot of things I'd rather not. That's what being damned is.

**EXT. FARM - NIGHT**

Villars is back on his feet, shambling forward, determined.

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)  
All your great mysteries? They're just the facts of life to me. I don't get to not know. I don't get to doubt.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

PAULA JEAN  
Some of us don't have the luxury of faith.

KERRIGAN  
The luxury?



She nods. She's serious. Gets to her feet, pacing back towards the open barn door.

PAULA JEAN

You can choose what to believe, *how* to believe. But all any of you ever do is wait for someone else to *tell* you. What a fuckin waste.

Kerrigan is silent for a long time.

KERRIGAN

It's not a luxury. Doubt's not freedom, it's a price we pay. You say faith's a choice like it's an easy one to make. Every day I ask myself, I don't mean to but I do: What if everything I believe is wrong? Or worse, what if everything I believe is right... and I'm not good enough?

Paula Jean smiles to herself, not turning around.

PAULA JEAN

You're good enough for me.

KERRIGAN

It hurts.

PAULA JEAN

I know. It's beautiful.

(beat)

We fit, don't we?

She turns at last. For the first time looking shy, looking hopeful. Like the repressed girl she must have once been, might still be, deep down.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Hurt in different ways. If we're both running anyway... We could keep on running together.

KERRIGAN

...Are you really her? Are you really Paula Jean?

PAULA JEAN

I am.

KERRIGAN

But not just Paula Jean.

PAULA JEAN

No, not just. Nobody's just one thing-

KERRIGAN

Who are you really?

She shrugs.

PAULA JEAN

Everyone I've ever been. A kid in Osaka who liked insects more than people, took to talkin to 'em and hearin 'em talk back. A lawyer on his deathbed in upstate New York, desperate for the strength to tell off his family of sycophants before he conked out. A woman in a village you've never heard of, untouched by time or the God we know, free to believe in miracles without a catch or consequences. I told you, we share more than bodies. "We" is I. And I am Legion.

The Biblical allusion unsettles him. A reminder that she's not what she seems.

KERRIGAN

Those memories don't belong to you, though. You know that.

PAULA JEAN

They live on in me. Just like heaven. Forever and ever, Amen.

He struggles, searching for the best way to say it...

KERRIGAN

Let me cast you out. I can do it alone, without Villars, without anyone. Just you and me. You say I'm not like them, well I don't think you're like...

She waits for him to finish, smirking.

PAULA JEAN

I'm not like other demons?

He sighs. She's making fun of him but he's not deterred.

KERRIGAN

You care about the people you've possessed.

PAULA JEAN

Because they're me.

KERRIGAN

Let me cast you out, give this girl her life back.

PAULA JEAN

What life??

KERRIGAN

Let something good come out of all this. If what you say is true, that's not the end for you.

She shakes her head, crestfallen.

PAULA JEAN

She *wants* me here. Sooner or later, you'll understand-

KERRIGAN

She doesn't know any better!

PAULA JEAN

And you do?? "What if I'm wrong? What if I'm not good enough?" You presume to lead a flock but you admit you don't know where you're leading them. You know nothing. Why can't you accept that?

She comes close. Kneels before him, looks him over.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Embrace that. She's not the only one who wants me. You're suffocating too. Chains you can't see. All I want to do, all any of us have ever wanted to do, is help you break them.

She takes his hand. Looks into his eyes.

KERRIGAN

How-

She leans in close to his good ear. He tenses. It's intimate. Passionate. After a breath, she WHISPERS.

PAULA JEAN  
Tell Jesus Christ to fuck himself.

KERRIGAN  
What?

He tries to pull away but she just leans closer.

PAULA JEAN  
Tell him his Father's a rapist, he's  
the fruit of violation and if any  
spirit here's unclean, any ghost in  
need of casting out, it's the Holy  
Ghost.

Kerrigan pulls his hand away, a look of disgust on his face.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Say it.

KERRIGAN  
Why? Because you told me to?

PAULA JEAN  
Because it makes your heart race.  
Cause it makes you feel alive.  
Because you want to.

KERRIGAN  
Get away from me.

She does. With genuine disappointment.

PAULA JEAN  
I'm sorry. I was wrong.  
(beat)  
I can't save you. And you can't help  
me anymore.

She turns to go.

KERRIGAN  
Wait. ...Paula Jean, I-

He tries to stand. That's when he realizes

HIS ANKLE

is handcuffed to the post behind him. She must have fished  
the keys from his pocket while he was out. Locked him up.

PAULA JEAN

But maybe when I'm gone, you'll find  
the strength to save yourself. I  
believe in you.

KERRIGAN

You can't leave me like this. Paula  
Jean! WAIT!

She strolls out of the barn, into the night.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Villars is doggedly stalking forward when he hears a voice,  
echoing across the field.

KERRIGAN (O.S.)

WAIT! PAULA JEAN!

He faces the sky with a grateful smile. Blesses himself. And  
follows the sound of Kerrigan's voice.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Kerrigan struggles fruitlessly, trying to pull his ankle  
free, kicking wildly at the post he's cuffed to, scanning  
the area for any tool within reach.

There's nothing. The lantern and the porcelain Jesus, that's  
all Paula Jean has left him with.

KERRIGAN

Come back! Let's talk about it! You  
don't know what you're doing! Please-

He stops. There's someone standing there. A shadow in the  
doorway. But it isn't Paula Jean, it's

VILLARS.

He limps forward, face a mess of lacerations.

VILLARS

Go on.

Kerrigan keeps quiet. Resumes kicking at the post.

Villars, meanwhile, calmly peruses the barn. Finds a dusty  
old tarp draped over an empty stall. He pulls it free,  
spreads it on the floor.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
How far is she? Still in earshot?

A length of rope next, hanging from a hook. He tosses it beside the tarp.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
PAULA JEAN! He's not alone! I'm with him now! You want him to walk out, you best join us!

He takes hold of a pitchfork. Four tapered prongs, long wooden handle. *This'll work...*

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Go ahead and scream now.

Kerrigan glares.

Villars sighs and slams the pitchfork down into his thigh.

Kerrigan winces. Swallows a yell.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Scream.

Villars jerks the handle, twists the prongs.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Paula Jean is stalking away. She hears Kerrigan's hard-earned SCREAM echo across the open space.

She hesitates. A pained expression.

Another SCREAM.

She casts her eyes down. And keeps walking.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Villars leans on the pitchfork, forcing it ever forward.

VILLARS  
That's good. One more ought to do it.

KERRIGAN  
Go to hell.

VILLARS  
Maybe.

He yanks the pitchfork out. Kerrigan SHOUTS in pain.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
 Maybe. But if I go, I'll go nobly,  
 knowing I played my part.

KERRIGAN  
 Your part in what? Undoing God's  
 Creation?

VILLARS  
 In paving the way for His Son's  
 return. She's been telling you  
 stories-

KERRIGAN  
 She's not the only one.

VILLARS  
 The truth's an ocean, son. You've  
 gotta take it one sip at a time or  
 you'll drown. You're drowning now,  
 for that I'm sorry, that's not how I  
 wanted it to go.

He moves to the door, watching for Paula Jean's return.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
 Still, it's important to me that you  
 understand: I don't expect heaven and  
 I don't fear hell. What I'm doing?  
 I'm not doing it for a reward. I'm  
 doing it because it's holy. If  
 Armageddon is God's will, seeing that  
 will done is a holy act.

KERRIGAN  
 What if you're wrong?

VILLARS  
 That's not how faith works.

He places the prongs of the pitchfork on Kerrigan's side.  
 Where Christ was wounded.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
 PAULA JEAN, you've got 45 seconds to  
 show up!

KERRIGAN  
 Or what? You'll kill me?

VILLARS

I'd rather not. You remind me of someone I did a lotta wrong to a long time ago. But I'm already damned, son. That means I can do things His other servants can't. Won't.

KERRIGAN

She's in the wind, she's not coming back. If she is what you say she is, why would she?

VILLARS

Cause part of her's still a young woman. Sheltered. Starved for affection and male attention. And you're handsome. And you're kind. -20 seconds, Paula Jean!

He adds more weight to the pitchfork. Drawing blood.

She's not coming. Kerrigan lowers his head. Begins to pray.

KERRIGAN

"Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me."

Villars looks down upon him sadly, nodding in approval. He grips the handle of the pitchfork, preparing to drive it home. And joins him.

VILLARS

"Oh good Jesus, hear me. Hide me within your wounds, keep me close to you, defend me-"

PAULA JEAN (O.S.)

"From my evil enemy."

They turn. She's back. To each man's surprise.

She starts forward, the sole remaining voice in recitation.

PAULA JEAN

"Call me at the hour of my death, and bid me come to you, to praise you with your saints, forever and ever."

VILLARS

Amen.



Kerrigan shakes his head. Part of him is happy to see her. The other part knows what this means.

KERRIGAN

Why? You were out!

She shrugs, a little disappointed herself. She knows what this means too.

PAULA JEAN

You called to me.

Villars keeps the pitchfork planted on Kerrigan's torso, animated by a newfound energy.

VILLARS

The tarp. Over your head, please.

Paula Jean sees the tarp. The rope.

PAULA JEAN

And you'll let him go?

VILLARS

You have my word.

PAULA JEAN

How do I know you'll keep it?

VILLARS

I swear on my immortal soul. On the blood of Jesus Christ, our savior.

KERRIGAN

Don't listen to him!

Villars presses the pitchfork into his side. Threatening.

Kerrigan shuts up. Paula Jean obeys. She scoops the tarp up off the floor and drapes it over her body.

She stands, unmoving, a pale, besheeted figure. A ghost.

VILLARS

Good girl.

At last, he pulls the pitchfork away. Grabs the rope and hastily coils it around her, pinning her arms to her sides, returning her to the restrained and hidden state they obtained her in. He yanks the rope tight. Too tight.

KERRIGAN

Paula Jean-

PAULA JEAN

It's alright. I know where this leads. I told you I believe in you.

Her voice is muffled. Her manner subdued. Her face obscured by dirty cloth. There's something haunting about it. Her willingness to go. Her gentle, pleading voice.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

Believe in me.

WHACK! Villars swings the pitchfork's wooden handle into the back of her head like a baseball bat.

Paula Jean goes down. Unable to shield herself from the blow or break her fall.

KERRIGAN

STOP!

Villars ignores him. He swings the handle down onto the tarp over and over, wearing himself out, working up a sweat.

Paula Jean has no choice but to take it. The shape beneath the sheet jerks. Spasms. WHIMPERS.

Kerrigan can barely watch.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

That's enough!

VILLARS

You led me on a merry chase, girl. But look where it brought you? Look where all paths lead when they lead away from God: right back where you started.

With Paula Jean subdued, he rolls her over. Finds her neck. Rests the long wooden handle of the pitchfork on her throat.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Trust me. I know.

Then he gets to his feet. And steps on the base of it.

Pressure on her windpipe. More and more as he leans forward, forcing the handle down. She begins to sputter and CHOKE beneath the tarp.

KERRIGAN

You're killing her!

VILLARS

No, I'm not.

The tarp writhes. Flops. She can't move her arms. Can't crawl away. Can't breath.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Just calming her down. Calm down, now. There you go.

KERRIGAN

I'm sorry! Paula Jean-

VILLARS

Shh shh shh. It's alright. She's alright. It's done.

She's stopped moving.

Kerrigan takes a moment to relish his victory before turning to Kerrigan. Lurching towards him.

VILLARS (cont'd)

I didn't tell you everything, but I didn't tell you lies. I'll take the girl, I'll cast the demon out. What happens after that... it's none of your concern.

He reaches out. Takes Kerrigan's hand in his. Lovingly examines it.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Your hands are clean. We can keep 'em that way. It might not be too late to save you.

KERRIGAN

Father Villars. Please, let me go.

VILLARS

When it's finished. We'll cleanse her soul. Then we'll see about the state of yours.

He smiles his condescending smile then steadies himself, bunches up the base of the tarp and drags the unconscious Paula Jean away.

Leaving Kerrigan alone in the barn.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Father Villars is beaten down. Running on empty. But always finding more reserves. He drags Paula Jean's body toward his truck, right where he left it on the side of the road.

But he stops at the sight of something shining in the mud.

HIS REVOLVER.

Cast aside. Half buried. He stoops to pick it up.

MOMENTS LATER,

he tosses Paula Jean into the bed of the truck, beside the covered corpse of its former owner.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Kerrigan sits, defeated. Staring at

HIS HANDS

in the flickering glow of the lantern.

After a beat, he folds them together in prayer.

KERRIGAN

Dear Heavenly Father... If I've ever needed you before, I need you now. I need help. I need guidance. I need someone to... to tell me what to do.

He falters at that. Just like Paula Jean said. Here he is begging for someone else to give him answers.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

I'm lost, Lord. Never felt more adrift. Or further from your sight. Even at my lowest...

He doesn't finish the thought. He tries again.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)

Am I here for a reason? ...Or am I here to find one? Did I ever feel you or did I just want to? I can't remember anymore. All this...

He opens his eyes, looks around at the physical world.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
All this drowns it out. The memory of  
grace...

He spots the porcelain Jesus statue, lying beside the  
lantern, in the dirt. His eyes narrow. *Why did she bring  
this here? Just this...*

He picks it up. Sad. Helpless. Mournful.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
Please. Please make me believe.

*But can he?* He hoists the porcelain Jesus in his hand. Tests  
the weight.

Flips it over to examine the base. **Made in Taiwan.**

A SMALL HOLE,

a pebble crammed inside. Jesus is no longer hollow. Paula  
Jean has filled him in.

Kerrigan rubs at the pebble, trying to dislodge it. But it's  
stuck in there good. Impossible to pry loose.

There's only one way to access whatever's inside....

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
Alright. Alright...

He examines

THE FACE

of the statue. Crudely painted. Smooth and benign.

Then he smashes the porcelain Jesus on the ground. Dirt and  
pebbles spill out.

For a moment, Kerrigan is dismayed. He digs through the tiny  
pile of rubble. Nothing? *Nothing??* And then he finds it.

THE HANDCUFF KEY.

He smiles in relief. And unlocks himself.

**EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Villars guides his truck up the long gravel road. He ignores

THE DEAD BOY

standing beside the road in his clear plastic tarp. More hallucinations. The proximity of the demon. Nothing more.

His headlights fall on the battered face of

AN OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Rural. Modest. But imposing in its own way. Eerie. The shadow of the cross on the roof spills across the weed choked driveway. Nobody's been here for very a long time.

Villars pulls to a stop. Limpes out of the truck. Circles around to take down the bed and haul out the wrapped figure of Paul Jean.

She lands with a THUD and grunts. Awake again.

PAULA JEAN

Careful. Precious cargo, remember?  
How's junior gonna infiltrate the church if I miscarry?

VILLARS

You shut your filthy mouth.

She laughs, voice muffled by her restraints.

PAULA JEAN

*I'm filthy? You and your boys are so steeped in sin you're not even trying to get clean anymore. Got hates you.*

VILLARS

God doesn't hate. That's for folks like you and me.

He reaches the front of the building. Throws open the doors.

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

He drags her down the aisle. Sconces on the walls, lit and flickering. A dim, orange light.

PAULA JEAN

Alright, but you really think he's gonna help you? You think a damned priest can call upon the power of Christ? Can't have an exorcism without that.

He kneels beside her. Draws out his pocket knife. Seizes her by the head.

Paula Jean is unafraid.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
You want to expel me? On whose  
authority?

He presses the knife forward, making a long incision in the tarp before tearing it open, freeing her head, her gaze.

THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH

is revealed for the first time. TWO MORE PRIESTS stand at the end of the nave. Stern, withered faces, exactly like you'd expect. Old men. Authority figures.

They're in full regalia: elegant cassocks reaching the floor, bare feet sticking out from beneath.

But these cassocks aren't black, they're a ghostly white. It's the collars at their throats that are black. A bizarre inversion. A negative image.

The theme is emphasized by

THE CRUCIFIX

behind them. Removed. Remounted. Upside down. A life sized Christ, feet pointed toward the heavens.

THE BISHOP waits beneath it. The leader of this "Hidden Diocese." The colors of his vestments are inverted as well. A blood red cassock with a pitch black belt. The mitre on his head is more ornate than it should be. Three points in place of the usual one. Almost a crown.

Candles on the floor are arranged as the points of a pentacle, surrounding a bed. The entire interior of the church has been transformed. A satanic parody of the space.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
Oh, you gotta be fucking kidding me.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Kerrigan is free. He takes a moment to tend to the puncture wounds in his thigh, using a jagged piece of porcelain to cut his sleeve, make it a tourniquet.

Awkwardly, he gets to his feet. Searches the barn.

A plastic red jug of gasoline. He shakes it. Still some liquid inside.

A few glass bottles.

And two wooden boards. *Perfect.*

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Two of the Inverted Priests are forcing Paula Jean onto the hospital bed complete in the center of the pentagram, one complete with leather restraints.

She writhes as they strap her down, but she's still weak, battered and bruised from Villars' assault.

**INT. VESTRY - ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

The Bishop watches Villars gingerly change out of his bloody, mud-caked clothes. He doesn't seem pleased.

BISHOP

What happened out there?

VILLARS

Trials. Not to worry. I faced them.

BISHOP

She got away from you, didn't she?

VILLARS

And I got her back.

BISHOP

She's injured.

VILLARS

She'll heal. The family knows they won't see her again until the baby's born.

He finally replaces the sodden beach towel with a real bandage. And dons his white cassock.

Slips off his shoes and socks.

The Bishop's expression is unreadable. At last, someone who's not intimidated by Villars.

BISHOP

I spoke to the father.



VILLARS

So did I.

BISHOP

He said there was someone with you.  
He didn't describe Father Manning.

VILLARS

No. The church sent a last minute  
replacement.

BISHOP

The church cannot know what we've  
done. What we're doing. No one can.

VILLARS

I'm well aware.

BISHOP

You should have told me.

VILLARS

You would have hesitated.

The two men eye one another. Maybe he's intimidated by  
Villars after all...

VILLARS (cont'd)

I'm tired of waiting. This is our  
chance. We may not get another-

BISHOP

This replacement-

VILLARS

I'll take care of him.

BISHOP

You haven't already?

VILLARS

He's nothing to worry about.

CUT TO:

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Kerrigan trudges through the mud. Wedges the wooden boards  
beneath the rear tires of Bethany's car. A little something  
to offer some traction.

He does his best to clear the windshield of blood and  
feathers before climbing behind the wheel.

The keys are still in the ignition. He twists them, throwing the vehicle into reverse...

The tires roll over the boards, out of the mud. Success.

In moments, he's on the road. Breathing heavily, surging with adrenaline. An expression of growing determination on his face.

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Villars and his fellow Inverse Priests kneel before the inverted crucifix, legs tucked beneath them, bare feet resting at the edge of the step leading to the chancel. Prayer posture.

The Bishop walks slowly behind them, chanting A GREGORIAN CHANT, a variation on the *Salve Regina*. Same cadence and melody you'd hear at Catholic mass. But altered lyrics.

BISHOP

(in Latin)

*Hail, unholy redeemer, the red dragon  
/ Hail our life, our wretchedness and  
despair / to you we turn, poor  
banished children of Eve / to thee we  
send our sighs / moaning and weeping  
in this valley of tears...*

As he chants, he kneels beside each man in turn, a knife in one hand, a wooden bowl in the other.

He draws the blade down each priest's right foot, a long vertical cut starting at the heel, down the sole. A short horizontal cut starting at the ball of the foot.

A cross. Which they will walk on when they stand.

Blood spills. Runs down each foot, collecting at the toes, dripping into the wooden bowl.

One by one, the Bishop marks them, collecting the initial rush of blood before moving on to the next.

PAULA JEAN

tugs at her restraints. No use.

PAULA JEAN

Can't count on your Father to have your backs, huh? So you call on mine to take me home? Too bad the devil doesn't do your bidding.

The Bishops and the priests, Villars included, surround her bed, moving slowly, ceremonially, leaving bloody

CROSS SHAPED FOOTPRINTS

on the floor.

BISHOP

He may if we do his. We are damned,  
Paula Jean-

PAULA JEAN

Don't say my name.

BISHOP

-each in his own way. But we will use  
our damned state for a righteous  
cause. Just as this child-

He lays a hand intrusively upon her stomach.

BISHOP (cont'd)

-born of evil, destined for evil,  
will through that evil, in the end...  
bring about the salvation of all  
mankind. We will bring about the  
salvation of all mankind.

PAULA JEAN

Jesus fucking Christ...

BISHOP

Amen.

He dips his fingers into the bowl. Splashes blood on her face, on her body. Like holy water.

The rite has begun. A satanic exorcism.

BISHOP (cont'd)

Lord Satan-

PRIESTS

We call upon you.

BISHOP

Lucifer, star of the morning, fairest  
and wisest of the angels-

PRIESTS

We fall before you.

BISHOP

Deliver us, oh Lord, unto sin. Unto  
wrath. Unto lewdness, lightning and  
tempest.

PRIESTS

Hail Satan.

They circle her. Chanting. As the wind begins to blow. And  
Paula Jean begins to writhe.

PAULA JEAN

Stop this.

BISHOP

Deliver us unto the wretched snares  
of hopelessness. For such is our lot.

PRIESTS

Hail Satan.

PAULA JEAN

You don't know what you're doing!

BISHOP

The lowly maggots of the Earth. God's  
filthy chosen. Exploit us. Defile us.

PRIESTS

Lead us from His light.

BISHOP

And unto yours.

Paula Jean GROWLS as her muscles seize. Deep and inhuman.  
Her eyes roll back to white.

**INT. BETHANY'S CAR - NIGHT**

Kerrigan is behind the wheel, speeding down the road.

KERRIGAN

County line... county line...

*There!* A sign beside the road. **Now Leaving Dekalb County**

He slams the brakes and backs up to the dirt path. Just as  
Villars described.

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

The Priests clutch their upside down crucifixes, holding them over Paula Jean's writhing body.

BISHOP

Come and claim your wayward child!

The candles surge with sudden jets of flame.

BISHOP (cont'd)

And leave us hers to lead the way.

The candles go out. Leaving the room steeped in shadow.

Paula Jean's eyes return to normal. She's crying. Terrified.

PAULA JEAN

Please. Please, no. Don't send me back, I want to stay. Let me stay! You can have the child. He's yours, I'll be good-

BISHOP

We offer you her soul and ours.

Paula Jean glares at Villars as her eyes roll back once more. A GROAN of pain. Her voice turns low and guttural. She pulls at her restraints.

THE UPSIDE DOWN JESUS

on the inverted cross gazes down on her.

PAULA JEAN

You just gonna let this happen?

She jerks at her bonds with renewed vigor, desperate to get free. Yank. Yank. CRACK!

Her left elbow bends backwards. She bellows in pain.

The Bishop resumes his GREGORIAN CHANT. The other priests join him.

Villars looks on in horror and wonder as

BLOOD

begins to seep from Paula Jean's eyes. Her ears. Her cuticles. Every orifice in her body.

She laughs sadly. Fatalistically. Her gums oozing.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
 You're just going to let this happen?

She says it again. Facing the cross again. But this time, she's not talking to Jesus. She's talking to

THE HORNED SILHOUETTE

crouching behind the inverted cross. The Devil himself, watching from the shadows. Subtle. Nearly subliminal. But there nonetheless. Lying in wait.

BISHOP  
 Draw her out!

PRIESTS  
 Hail Satan!

BISHOP  
 Return her to the pit!

PRIESTS  
 Hail Satan!

DROPS OF BLOOD

splatter onto the floor as Paula Jean's body shakes.

She accepts her fate. Closes her eyes. Whispers to herself.

PAULA JEAN  
 ...like rain... on rooftops...

The Bishop continues in Latin but Villars has frozen in place. He cocks his head.

VILLARS  
 Wait.

Nobody acknowledges him. So he raises his voice.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
 Stop!

At last, the Bishop ceases chanting. Watches Villars start toward the front doors.

PRIEST 1  
 What is that? Is that music?

It is. Outside, blaring loud on a speaker. The muffled melody of Belinda Carlisle. *Mad About You*.

PAULA JEAN'S LIP

curls in a gratified smile.

VILLARS

Shit.

He throws the doors open.

BISHOP

Father Villars!

**EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Bethany's car is parked out front. Headlights on. Door open. Kerrigan's cell phone resting on the passenger seat, hooked up to the bluetooth. MUSIC blasting.

VILLARS

Father Kerrigan! You know not what you do...

He approaches the car cautiously.

VILLARS (cont'd)

You intervene, your life is forfeit.

AROUND THE CORNER,

Father Kerrigan creeps low, two glass bottles under his arm. He can hear Villars' voice and the distant music.

VILLARS (O.S.)

I should have taken it when I had the chance! I showed you *mercy*! And you spit in my face.

Kerrigan sets the pitchfork down. Pulls out Paula Jean's cigarette lighter.

VILLARS (O.S.) (cont'd)

You'll regret that! I'll make you regret that!

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Paula Jean pulls at her restraints with newfound enthusiasm as the priest huddle together, uncertain.

BISHOP

Father Villars, what is this? Get  
back here, we must see this through.  
We've come too far to-

CRASH. The stained glass window on the right bursts inward.  
A molotov cocktail hits the pews, lighting up the room.

The inverted cross casts a strong shadow in the new light.  
But there's nothing and nobody standing behind it now.

The priests scatter, searching for cover, not knowing where  
the next attack will come from.

PRIEST 1

Get down!

Kerrigan crawls through the broken window, another molotov  
cocktail in hand. He takes in the blasphemous state of the  
church. Sees Paula Jean tied to the bed.

The Bishop rushes toward him in anger.

BISHOP

You can't be here! This doesn't  
concern you-

Kerrigan cocks his arm. And throws the bottle.

WHOOSH. Paula Jean LAUGHS in delight as the Bishop goes up  
in flames. SCREAMING. Flailing.

Kerrigan winces at the result of his action but doesn't  
falter. He swings with the handle of the pitchfork. A few  
soild HITS before the flaming Bishop cuts to the right,  
dashing in a panic.

WHAM. Straight into a pillar, full speed. He goes down.  
Doesn't get back up.

Priest 2 cuts his losses and makes a mad dash for the front  
while Priest 1 holds his ground...

Until Kerrigan madly swings at him, pelting him with blows,  
forcing him back onto the ground and behind the pulpit.

The SONG continues to play in the car outside, a jaunty,  
surreal, diegetic counterpoint to the violence.

#### **EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Villars turns just in time to see Priest 2 rush out, leaving  
the double doors open behind him. Fire within.



*What the fuck?* He starts limping forward as Priest 2 rushes past, not looking back.

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - SIMULTANEOUS**

Kerrigan sees Villars out front. Limping forward. Moving as fast as he can...

He charges for the doors. The two men lock eyes, racing toward one another.

Kerrigan gets there first. He slams the doors on the older priest's face. Shoves the pitchfork through the U-shaped handles, barring it.

**EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Villars pounds on the doors furiously for a moment.

Then circles around.

**INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Immediate threats dealt with, Kerrigan goes to Paul Jean's bedside. He kneels to undo her left arm strap.

PAULA JEAN

You could have run.

KERRIGAN

We'll run together.

The straps are heavy. Cumbersome leather buckles from a hospital or institution.

As soon as he gets the first one free, Priest 1 grabs him from behind.

He's an older man, but he's bigger. And he's worked up his courage. He throws Kerrigan to the ground, kicking at him.

Paula Jean wastes no time. One arm is free. That's enough to begin working on the others.

VILLARS,

meanwhile, has made his way through the broken window. His wounded side has opened up again, staining his cassock.

He loses balance and falls to the ground. Woozy but determined, he's back on his feet in moments.

He sees Paula Jean fumbling with her straps.

Sees Kerrigan struggling with the sole remaining priest. Neither are trained fighters. It's awkward and ugly. The priest has the upper hand, locking his arm around Kerrigan's throat from behind.

The Bishop is still burning on the floor. Unmoving.

Villars ignores it all and proceeds to

THE VESTRY.

Kerrigan seems to have been subdued, Priest 1 hauling him toward the double doors. But he's not beaten yet.

He reaches into his pocket. Draws out Paula Jean's

BOX CUTTER.

CLICK-CLICK. He extends the remaining two segments of blade. Drives it into Priest 1's forearm and slices... all the way up. He opens the man from elbow to wrist.

The Priest SHOUTS, releases him. But grabs hold of his wrist. Twists. Fighting for control of the knife.

He manages to get a hold of Kerrigan's ring finger. SNAPS it downward, breaking it.

Kerrigan SCREAMS and drops the box cutter.

Priest 1 kicks it across the floor... directly beside

PAULA JEAN'S BED.

After a beat, her feet touch the floor. She's free.

#### **INT. VESTRY - ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Villars stumbles in. Sweaty and exhausted. Over it all. He searches the room. Tosses aside his folded clothes.

Gets his revolver.

#### **INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - NIGHT**

Priest 1 is bleeding freely from his arm. He slams a fist into Kerrigan's face, watches him stumble to the floor.

Then he yanks the pitchfork free from the double doors. Raises it high, ready to impale Kerrigan.

But Paula Jean barrels into him, wrapping her one good arm around him. The other hangs loose, elbow broken.

He drops the pitchfork with a CLANG. Tries to pry her off. He gets in a good hit.

But she wraps her legs around his waist. With supernatural grace, she grips the box cutter in her good hand and buries the blade in his throat.

He gasps.

She shoves her palm forward. Flat. WHAM. The entire box cutter disappears into his neck.

Blood everywhere.

Together, they collapse to the floor.

Paul Jean pants, coming down from the adrenaline high.

KERRIGAN

is beside her, sitting in the pool of spreading blood. Shaking. Pale. In shock at everything that just happened.

PAULA JEAN  
Hey. Hey, it's alright.

KERRIGAN  
What have I done?

The dead priest, the burning Bishop. The blood on his hands and clothes.

KERRIGAN (cont'd)  
Oh Lord, what have I done?

PAULA JEAN  
You saved yourself.

She holds him, soothing him. Takes his head in her hand and looks into his eyes.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)  
You came.

He nods, comforted by her presence.

She lovingly pushes his hair back. And kisses him. A real kiss. A passionate kiss. A moment of- BLAM!

VILLARS

leans in the doorway of the vestry, gun in hand.

Kerrigan scrambles aside, ducking behind a pew. Only realizing a second later that

PAULA JEAN

has fallen to the floor. Hit in the back. Coughing blood. She scrambles for cover as well, but she's slow.

BLAM BLAM. Villars moves sideways, taking shots.

VILLARS

It's over, Kerrigan. For both of us.

Kerrigan and Paula Jeans are on opposite sides of the aisle. He nods to her. She nods weakly in return, bleeding badly.

THE PITCHFORK

lies discarded on the floor. Kerrigan crawls to it.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Either I was right about you and God sent you here to stop me. Or I was wrong...

He scans the pews, searching for movement, not wanting to be taken unaware.

But then his eyes land on the upside down Jesus and he hesitates a moment. Nodding to his lord and savior.

VILLARS (cont'd)

I was wrong...

Kerrigan takes advantage of the distraction. He lunges forward with a ROAR of defiance, thrusting the pitchfork forward before Villars can raise his gun.

The prongs pierce his arm. Kerrigan is able to angle the pitchfork, forcing Villars' aim to the side.

BLAM BLAM. Two wild shots then- WHAM! Kerrigan guides Villars' arm into a pillar.

The gun flies from his hand. Clatters to the floor.

Kerrigan yanks the prongs free. Redirects them.

VILLARS (cont'd)

Wait!

He doesn't. Kerrigan drives the pitchfork forward with all his weight. Into Villar's chest. Into the wall behind him.

THUD. Villars stands there in disbelief. Impaled.

Kerrigan stands before him, in a fair amount of disbelief himself. But not shying away.

The two men size one another up. One last time.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
F- Father. Forgive me.

His hand twitches. Rises toward Kerrigan in supplication.

Kerrigan watches, a pained expression on his face. Pity.

VILLARS (cont'd)  
Absolve me. Let me... confess to you.  
Let me try-

BLAM. His head explodes. *No confession. No absolution.*

PAULA JEAN

stands shakily behind Kerrigan, gun raised.

She collapses. He rushes to her.

Carnage all around them. Bodies and flames.

Her breath is short. And growing shorter. WHEEZING.

PAULA JEAN  
I forgot... how much having a body  
can hurt.

KERRIGAN  
I told you.

She nods. Amused in spite of the pain. And WHEEZES again.

PAULA JEAN  
Hear that? Pretty sure it's my lung.

KERRIGAN  
I'll get you out.

He takes her body in his arms. A pose that calls to mind Michelangelo's *Pieta*. The Madonna holding the body of her holy son.

Paula Jean takes his hand. Places it on her stomach.

PAULA JEAN

At least we bought a few more  
years... of beer and Snowballs...

There are tears in his eyes. He shakes his head, refusing to believe it.

KERRIGAN

No. Not after all this. Everything  
you made me do.

Her breathing is so soft and slow now. It might as well not be there at all. She narrows her eyes, offended.

PAULA JEAN

...Did I? ...Make you?

After a moment, he shakes his head.

KERRIGAN

No. But I came for you-

PAULA JEAN

Then call for me...

He tenses. Looks down at her. Her pale face is deadly serious. He knows what she's asking.

PAULA JEAN (cont'd)

If you want me.... to be here...

Her last breath. Her last words.

Her cradles her body in the burning church and after a moment of mournful uncertainty, he opens his mouth to speak-

CUT TO:

**INT. ROADSIDE DINER - AFTERNOON**

Time has passed. Kerrigan sits at the counter alone. His earlobe has healed, closed up and unbandaged.

THE OTHER CUSTOMERS

watch him warily. Sad looks on their faces.

But Kerrigan smiles as he sips his

ORANGE MILKSHAKE.

He finishes it off and sits back, satisfied. Lost in thought. In memory.

An orange milkshake. Just like Paula Jean told him she would order years down the line... if she were him.

*Is she? Him? Or rather: is he her? Has "we" become "I"?*

Without a word, Kerrigan pays and exits.

The CLERK watches him go, suppressing a chill.

**INT. CAR - AFTERNOON**

He climbs behind the wheel. Adjusts the mirror, catching sight of his own gaze. And turns on the radio.

Belinda Carlisle blares again. A different song this time. Bombastic and cheery.

*Heaven is a Place on Earth.*

The car pulls out. The credits roll.

THE END